



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600075995+

















# PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE;

OR,

## THE MODERN GRISELDA.

A Domestic Tale.

---

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

---

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
*SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, WHAT? &c.*

---

Well-order'd home, man's best delight to make;  
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,  
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,  
And sweeten all the toils of human life—  
This be the female dignity and praise.

THOMSON.



VOL. II.



---

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE  
Minerva-Press,  
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.  
LEADENHALL-STREET.  
1813.

249. s. 29.



---

## *Patience and Perseverance.*

---

### CHAP. I.

**T**HE day following that on which this important but not elucidating letter had arrived at the general's, was that on which the world of fashion, extravagance, and intrigue, were expected to display their various pretensions to wit, beauty, and splendour, under the auspices of the countess of Castlehowel, who had long considered herself monopolist of all the three; but who had of late found herself in the situation of many other beauties, who are willing to reign when their subjects are unwilling to be governed, and are



driven to compromise in points where they were accustomed to command.

The countess was a woman of genteel family, but very small fortune, and had been taught, early in life, to set a great value on those charms which she considered the *means* of fortune, and upon those accomplishments which were calculated to give power to beauty, and perpetuate its empire. Rank and splendour were rendered the great objects of desire, and to attain them, as lord Lyttleton says,

Hands, eyes, and lips, were put to school,  
And each instructed feature had its rule.

The countess did not disgrace her education; she fixed her affections on a coronet; and though many temptations occurred, which would have made a mind less vigorous, or less vain, have given up the pursuit, and rested satisfied with a less glittering prize, lady Sarah, though the portionless daughter of a lord, who, with very good blood in his veins, knew the world

world too well to expect that would be accepted in lieu of the treasures of Ophir, outstript the hopes of her family, and in the eighteenth year of her age, became wife of the earl of Castlehowel, who was very fond, very rich, and very weak, three qualities that rendered him, in the opinion of many young women of fashion, the most enviable match in England; and therefore the countess had the honour she most coveted—the envy of her own sex, which, in some cases, is as sweet as the admiration of the other.

For several years, the beauty and fashion of the countess were the theme of panegyric—her splendid fêtes and extravagant dress, the subject of delight and surprise: in turn her high play excited observation; and, as a thing in course, her powers of drawing others into the snare where she had suffered herself, became the topic of animadversion; and many who had in vain sought to mix in her splendid parties, or pay the incense of flattery at the shrine of her  
beauty,

#### PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE.

beauty, could now, with a knowing shrug, pity those who had been more successful in obtaining her ladyship's protection.

The career of dissipation, and especially that period of it which had been devoted to the feverish atmosphere of a gaming-table, had made its usual inroads on the beauty and health of the countess of Castlehowel; and there were periods in which the extreme lassitude arising from intolerable fatigue, obliged her to admit of a temporary cessation of business and pleasure; for even a fine lady may be tired out, though her power of enduring toil certainly is as far beyond that of an ordinary charwoman, as the difference in their rank: and it happened during one of these languid periods, that an acquaintance commenced between sir Edward Langdale and the countess, in which the latter, conscious that she could not charm by her usual splendour, endeavoured to make up that deficiency by becoming, as the novel phrase is, most exquisitely

exquisitely interesting ; and she succeeded so far as to make the baronet consider her as a very lovely woman, of most amiable disposition, whom circumstances had seduced into the path of dissipation ; and though not much inclined to think favourably of women of fashion, he gave her ladyship credit for a larger portion of purity in sentiment, and urbanity in disposition, than any in the circle of his acquaintance. He looked at her lord, and felt shocked at the disproportion of intellect between them ; and, like many other men, was persuaded that had she been united to himself, she would have been a very different woman, not perceiving that his own errors in conduct were full as likely to mislead her, as the deficiencies in her present husband's understanding. These sentiments naturally produced somewhat of that tenderness her ladyship wished to excite, during her pensive mood, and, as she imagined, laid the foundation of a warmer and blinder attachment,

tachment, when such an one should become necessary to her interests, and contribute to that splendour of exhibition, and affectation of pleasure and power, which had long usurped the seat of deposed happiness in the bosom of the peeress.

Her ladyship had so long held the feelings, the actions, and the happiness of others in her power, and played them off according to her own ambition or caprice, she at length concluded herself perfectly free from the weakness she had so often ridiculed in others, and found, with no small alarm, that sir Edward was really become an object of so much interest with her, that she was never easy in any party where he was absent; that his society superseded even her desire for play; and, what was still stranger, so far from wishing to lead him to the gaming-table, to share the fate of those who had paid in solid gold for empty blandishments, she felt desirous rather to save him even from herself.

self. Thus the dawnings of illicit love are often found in unison with amiable feelings, a circumstance to be much lamented, as it sometimes casts a veil over their deformity in the eyes of the unthinking, and disposes even the best of us to "call good evil, and evil good."

The degree of surprise excited by a sense of new emotions, did not lead the countess to many exertions against the insidious passion, of which she had heard much, and believed little; but she was anxious, to an uncommon degree, that its fullest effects should be felt by the baronet; and perhaps her unusual solicitude proved his greatest safeguard; as, notwithstanding his prepossession in her favour, he could not avoid considering her in the light of a woman who knew the world, and loved it too well to be likely to sacrifice its honours and pleasures at the shrine of transitory passion. As her ladyship recovered her health, and renewed her orgies at the gaming-table, he recovered his

powers of observation ; and, at the end of the season, the countess found herself his debtor for six hundred guineas, without any hold on his heart that could indemnify her for the loss. During her cessation in the following summer, it was her misfortune to think more about this one creditor, a thousand times, than of the whole multitude, who for many years past had had the honour of standing in that capacity to her ladyship ; and when, after some previous pangs from the " green-eyed monster," she at last was finally assured of his marriage, her rage, sorrow, and mortification, utterly exceeded all she had felt before ; and did not subside till she had formed a resolution of leaving no art untried to gain the affections of the bridegroom, which she concluded, on the authority of observation, might be found more yielding the following winter than they had been the past, when, in all probability, he had been (as the phrase is) in love with the girl he had now married, and  
who,

who, in a few months, having lost the charm of novelty, would cease to attach him. In this conclusion she was still more confirmed, when she found that sir Edward's affairs were in such a state of decline as to need the specific of an heiress; and as her own were in equal want of cordials, she contemplated both the man and his wife as desiderate in her system, and resolved to act accordingly.

Though sir Edward Langdale did not love his wife, either as she merited love, or as he was capable of feeling it, yet from some latent cause, the charms and the manœuvres of the countess failed in calling forth any feeling similar to her own. Some little germ of virtue, some sense of honour, esteem for his wife, or perhaps a wandering inclination for another, continually opposed itself to her wishes; and the season was again passing by, without her ladyship having made any progress in gaining his heart, or paying her debt: but as the next best thing, she had cer-

B 5

tainly



tainly the satisfaction of believing that she had made his wife tolerably miserable, as the ingenuous countenance of Griselda had in its various changes of complexion shewn but too plainly during the little intercourse the two ladies had held with each other.

Such was the countess of Castlehowel, whose splendid rooms were now thrown open to receive the motley crowd of visitants, whom whim, wit, ignorance, or fashion, had arrayed in every possible variety of garb, and taught to assume every mode of conversation. Lady Langdale wore a domino ; sir Edward said he intended to appear as a Spanish grandee, but it was not possible for him to go early, which he pressed his lady to do, because the scene was new to her, and she was most likely to be amused by it, before the dancing commenced. Ever thankful for even the most trivial marks of personal attention, Griselda took his advice, and was received by the countess in the most flattering

flattering manner as one of her earliest visitants, and by her introduced to a young lady who was habited in the usual costume of the goddess of Fortune, but as she wore no mask, lady Langdale concluded she was probably a relation of the countess's; in this she was soon undeceived, as that lady had scarcely pronounced her name, Miss Templeman, than she added, in a half whisper, "A poor girl I keep to oblige lord Castlehowel; a very good child, I confess, and has nothing vulgar about her, or I could not consent to it.— As I shall be inevitably torn from you in the course of the evening, my dear lady L. I have given her particular orders to attend to you."

Lady Langdale was not more vexed at the indelicacy of this address, than struck with the subject of it, whose "pure and elegant blood" rose in her cheek with the modest indignation of wounded sensibility. She appeared about eighteen; her figure, though not tall, was extremely elegant,

and Griselda thought her the most beautiful brunette she had ever beheld, and perceived immediately a strong likeness in her to the Madonna the countess had purchased, and was therefore no longer at a loss for the cause of her remark, "That she feared it might be mistaken for a portrait of one of her own family." She addressed her with all that reassuring suavity of manner which was natural to her, and which soon restored the lovely girl to such a degree of self-possession, as enabled her to show that native grace, and the advantages of a liberal education, were not less attractive in her than the beauty she so eminently possessed.

Griselda's generous heart was affected with the situation of this lovely girl, which she could not believe was a happy one, and was certain, in her dependent situation, could not be deemed a proper one; but while she was casting about in her mind how it could be possible for *her* to improve it, without an interference she had not,

not yet a right to make, the room began to fill with company, and Miss Templeman was reminded by the countess that she had a character to sustain : as the lady said this, she vanished to disguise herself, and then mix with the throng, thus deputing the young representative of the fickle goddess to entertain her guests, most of whom having been received by her ladyship unmasked, were not aware of her intended change.

Friars and nuns, Turks and Jews, Chinese and Laplanders, Czars and beggars, all paid their respects in turn to Fortune, and were received with a smile and a blush, not unfrequently followed by a low sigh, which did not escape the ear of lady Langdale, who still continued near the attractive shrine, and was much amused by the different addresses of those around her, although she found some degree of awkwardness in the novelty of her situation, and wished exceedingly to see sir Edward enter the room. While her eyes were bent towards  
the

the door, she perceived a troop of gipsies enter, headed by their king, who, after giving them orders which dispersed them in various parts, approached the place where she was sitting, with the goddess of Fortune at her right hand, and, in a supplicating tone, requested the latter "to shower some of her favours on one whose life was dedicated to the acknowledgment of her power, and the revelation of her will."

"My power," replied the fair emblemist, "is acknowledged far beyond my wishes; I therefore owe you no gratitude for homage that is unwelcome; and still less am I inclined to grant you favours for tearing the veil of futurity from my eyes, and exposing my intentions to those votaries whose obedience is rendered more implicit from their blindness."

"Ah!" said the tattered monarch, with a sigh, "thus are the favours of Fortune ever refused to those who most zealously support her dominion: but know, ungrateful

grateful queen, even your cruelty shall not prevent my friendship or lessen my adoration.’

At this moment a venerable bramin, of a majestic figure, approached, and waving round the goddess a long white wand, intervened between her and the gipsy, exclaiming, in a solemn tone, “ Daughter of the dust, listen not to the tongue of the deceiver ; let not the pride of beauty render thee deaf to the voice of instruction, or the flattery of youth render thee callous to the remonstrances of age.”

The seriousness of the address struck the youthful auditor ; and forgetting every character but her own, she replied, with equal sweetness and simplicity, “ that she had never yet been averse from the lessons of wisdom, and she was ready to hear them now.”

“ Then listen to me,” resumed the speaker, “ thou dewdrop of the morning, as yet unsullied in thy loveliness, and I trust uninjured in thy peace. Fly from  
this

this circle, and detest its vain delights. Thou hast no protectress here ; for the Circe of this palace offers thee the cup of intoxication to thy undoing, and makes thy hand the medium of destruction to others. Return then to the lowly path, where, hand in hand with innocence and peace, thou mayest tread in the paths of contented humility, and leave this herd of kingly beggars and beggared kings, to rejoice that thy escape has saved them from an additional pang in the hour of retributive remorse."

" But whither, whither can I fly ?" exclaimed the poor girl, exceedingly agitated.

" Prove thy sincerity in the wish expressed by that question," returned the mask, in a voice more natural, though less dignified, " and thou wilt gain the friend thou needest. Farewell, blossom of the spring ; forget not the advice of thy bramin ; remember the eye of a *father* is upon thee."

*" A father !*

"A *father*! oh, sir, whoever you are," exclaimed Miss Templeman, tearing the bandage from her eyes, which were full of tears, "tell me——"

The bramin on speaking the last words had mixed in the crowd, and was now withdrawn. The lovely representative of Fortune looked wistfully round, but saw only lady Langdale and the king of the gipsies near her.

"Who," she again cried, "who can it be that has the goodness to interest himself so much for *me*?"

"That question must apply to nearly every man in the room," said the gipsy king; "but if you really wish to know what brought the bramin from the plains of Hindostan, to warn the goddess of Fortune, and to show her that she stands in as slippery a place as any of her votaries, apply to my powers of divination; or if the seer has alarmed you by proscribing them, employ your silent protectress there to do it for you."

"To



"To this that protectress has no objection," said lady Langdale; "for the bramin has awakened her curiosity exceedingly."

The gipsy flung himself into an attitude of astrological observation, and with much characteristic grimace and ability, in a few moments broke into a doggrel rhapsody:—

"The bramin's beard is white as snow,

Yet auburn tresses shade his brow;

Nor distant is the day, I ween,

When love to gild his path was seen;

But lo! one planet's evil power

Hath rifled love's connubial bower.

His fair the 'fraudful dice hath tost,

And with the game her honour lost,

And all the injur'd bramin knows,

Of wounded honour, lost repose,

Bade him thy gentle breast alarm,

To save thee from a deeper harm."

"It is so evident that you are the friend of the bramin," said Griselda, "that I am somewhat

— somewhat surprised that he should think it necessary to warn the lady against you.”

“He knew me not, fair lady, or he would have told his protégée to have inquired her fortune at my hands. Had he condescended to have requested a specimen of my powers, he would have been convinced that the king of the gipsies ought not to be classed with the seducers of innocence, nor even the votaries of dissipation.”

Here he was interrupted by a country apothecary, who, with great *sang froid*, claimed the privilege of his profession, and proceeded to feel the pulse of the goddess of Fortune; at which his tawny majesty indignantly starting, exclaimed, “If that fair hand were committed but to my inspection, I would foretel a crisis to Fortune beyond the feeling of the moment.”

“Fair goddess, fly from this vagabond intruder with your devoted slave,” said the man of physic; “for he has induced a  
nervous

nervous affection, symptomatic of febrile ardency, for which it shall be my glorious province to administer the gentlest anodyne in the pharmacopœia of Cupid."

"As I am in perfect health," replied the goddess, withdrawing her hand, "you must allow me to decline your specific."

"Impossible! you are *not* in health," said the apothecary, endeavouring to retain her hand, "and it is only delirium which tempts you to think so. Every woman in the room has pronounced you bilious—every man believes you to be in a plethora: you are haunted by yellow melancholy, and guarded by black despair. I perceive excitability in your eyes, and irritability on your trembling lip. Allow me, lovely invalid, to lead you where I can administer a consoling soporific, to 'steep your bosom in forgetfulness,' and force you to enjoy the pleasure your presence inspires."

Miss Templeman involuntarily seized the arm of lady Langdale, who assured the apothecary

apothecary that his proffered jalap must be offered to a being of inferior note; for though the goddess of Fortune often dispensed drugs, like many other dealers, she never took any of them herself.

The apothecary shrugged his shoulders and withdrew, while the gipsy, again adopting the air of inspiration, cried out,

“ Ah! if beneath that halcyon wing,  
This gentle daughter of the spring,  
Far from the croud’s ignoble strife,  
Could pass the hours of virtuous life,  
Then might a *heart* to virtue prone,  
Sigh at her feet, and dare be *known*.”

As the extempore verses were pronounced with great warmth, and some forgetfulness of a peculiar twang of voice adopted by the character, Griselda felt assured that the voice was familiar to her; and much interested in the earnest manner of the speaker, and more so in the person spoken of, she was rather at a loss how to reply, when her attention was suddenly arrested by the entrance of a Spanish grandee.

grandee. Delighted to see her husband, and imagining that she should enjoy the scene around her with infinitely more zest, she immediately accosted him, observing she was sorry he had not arrived sooner, as there were a few characters which could not have failed to amuse him; and particularized the king of the gipsies, who at the same time advanced with an offer of revealing the decrees of futurity to his excellenza.

“It ill becomes don Rodrigo Anatheo Ferdinando del Almanza to listen to the voice of a vagabond,” replied the representative of the blue-blooded grandee; “but the first dulcet accents of this fair dame soften the pride of rank, and therefore mollifies the resentment due to thy presumption. Speak then, thou monarch of the dingy race, and tell how far fair Venus shines propitious to my wishes.”

After a moment's pause, the gipsy, in a severe tone, thus resumed his prophetic rhymes:—

“From

" From the eyrie, nearest Jove,  
Thou didst wed a matchless love,  
Whose dove-like eye, and cygnet breast,  
Had lull'd thy guilty heart to rest,  
If honour held a tablet there,  
Or pity own'd the ungen'rous sphere ;  
But he the guilty tale suppress—  
Rodrigo's conscience knows the rest."

" Upon my honour, Mr. Gipsy, you give my conscience credit for more penetration than it possesses ; and your communication with the stars has played you false this time, however, for I had never the honour to wed either from the eyrie of Jove, or the nest of a dove."

The voice, which was now perfectly natural, convinced Griselda that she had been completely mistaken in supposing it was sir Edward ; and she was overwhelmed with confusion, which increased on the king of the gipsies withdrawing, especially as she recollected this was the voice of the very person who had indirectly given her that information of sir Edward's *pen-*  
*chant*

*chant* for lady Castlehowel, which had cost her so much uneasiness. She had inadvertently mixed in the crowd, and she now looked wistfully round for her young companion.

“To what part of the room shall I lead you, madam?” said the Spaniard, interpreting her looks, and bowing with profound respect upon her hand as he took it.

“To Fortune, sir; her figure may be easily recognised by you. I left her at the upper end of the room.”

“When you, I presume, blest me by mistake, ‘with words of such sweet import,’ that I am persuaded the goddess was at that delicious moment as much my friend as you believe her to be yours; would to Heaven her influence might be ever felt only by us in unison!”

“I certainly mistook you for sir Edward, sir,” said lady Langdale, “whose habit resembles yours. If you have seen him in the upper room, or any other part of the house, you will oblige me by conducting  
ing

ing me to him : I do not apprehend there will be more than two masks in the same costume."

"To the burning sands of India, or the snowy deserts of Siberia, loveliest and most injured of women, I would gladly conduct you ; but to your husband I cannot bring a treasure he knows not how to value."

"This *badinage*, sir, is unworthy even the humours of the place : the honour of a Spaniard used to be deemed so sacred, that he who assumes the garb should 'imitate the virtue which he has not.'"

"But, my dear lady, if you would persuade me to an office from which my heart recoils, even while it burns to obey you, you *must* allow me the privilege of the moment, to pour out the feelings of a heart devoted to you, with an ardour that mocks controul, and——"

"Whoever you may be, sir," said Griselda, indignantly withdrawing her hand, "I insist upon your immediately



leaving me. The wife of sir Edward Langdale cannot listen to language like this in any situation."

"The wife of a dissipated man, beautiful enough to attract all eyes, and amiable enough to interest all hearts, *must* hear language like this, and sooner or later to acknowledge its power," said the mask, somewhat haughtily. "The husband who neglects his wife challenges——"

At this moment a lady, splendidly arrayed in a Spanish habit, broke through the crowd, and seizing the gentleman's arm, exclaimed——

"Cruel Antonio! is it thus my love is repaid? thus the jealousy that tortures my heart perpetually loaded with the fuel that consumes me? Ah, why did we ever leave the plains of Andalusia, to breathe an atmosphere contagious in its inconstancy, and chilling in its influence!"

The lady carried her point, for the don's surprise was such that he instantly released Griselda, who found herself, at the  
same

same moment, surrounded by the gipsy tribe, with the king at their head; and in the address of one of the females, heard the beloved voice of her dear Maria. She now instantly recognised captain Seymour as the gipsy king; and remembering the circumstance of his purchasing the Madona, which so greatly resembled Miss Templeman, she was no longer at a loss to account for the close attendance he had hitherto paid that lovely girl, whom Mrs. Barnet in a whisper now desired lady Langdale to introduce her to.

As the goddess of Fortune continued nearly stationary, lady Langdale soon found her, and said, that if she had any inclination to have her fortune told, she had brought a Sybil, whose sex a least would not be an objection to her inquiries.

The poor girl, with infinite frankness, gave her hand to the gipsy, saying, "Though she had little faith, yet she had much friendship in the presentation."

The gipsy, after much examination, gave a deep sigh.

"I am afraid you find nothing good in my destiny?"

"I find, fair goddess, that it is your misfortune to have the same power of making your own fate, that you have over that of others; and I doubt whether your judgment and resolution be equal to the rectitude of your intentions."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the young creature, "what is there hanging over my head! Every one I have seen this night, except those who approach me in the language of fulsome adulation, are giving me warning against an evil I cannot comprehend, and therefore know not how to elude."

The gipsy approached still nearer to her.

"I would unmask, Miss Templeman, but my face would be a stranger to you, for never was it seen in these rooms, nor ever will, though I have entered them in disguise, at the desire of my husband, who has heard much

much of you from a friend, and wishes to serve you. Your youth, beauty, and apparent innocence, induced us to hope that your present situation is irksome to you; yet you are a being so wrapt in mystery, which, pardon me, is a sad pity, that we know not how we can interfere, so as to serve you."

"There is no mystery about *me*, indeed, madam: I believe there must be some mistake in my person."

"I believe not: you call yourself Templeman, and say your father was an artist."

"And I speak the truth; — what else should I speak? God forbid that I should disown a parent whose virtues I honour."

"The countess says you are extremely artful, and are anxious to prove yourself a gentlewoman, by some romantic claims of relationship to her lord; and that she fears he may some day be induced to own you for what she has long suspected you, his natural daughter."

The poor young creature, gasping and

breathless, was obliged to retire to an adjoining boudoir, where she was attended by Mrs. Barnet and lady Langdale, who were both exceedingly shocked at the effects of an address, which, however kindly meant, was too bluntly delivered to be justified. After a short struggle, she burst into tears, which saved her from fainting; and then addressing Mrs. Barnet, who used every consolatory expression she could devise to console her for the pain she had occasioned her, she said, "If the countess, or any other person, has thrown a veil of mystery over me, for the purpose of injuring me in the opinions of the virtuous and good, who only are worthy my regard, they have acted with a degree of cruelty I had hitherto no idea of. The countess well knows who I am;—I have no pretensions to her relationship, in any way whatever:—I am neither more nor less than the daughter of a miniature painter, who was once so fortunate as to save the life of the earl of Castlehowel, at

the

the risk of his own. Gratitude induced the earl to offer my father assistance, which he would never accept in any way, till circumstances rendered an asylum for his daughter acceptable. Had he," said she, weeping bitterly, "had he foreseen to what she was exposed when she left his fostering arms, he would have rather placed her in the meanest cottage, and secured bread purchased by her own labour, as a blessed alternative."

"You shall live with me," said lady Langdale, taking her hand tenderly.

"No, no, that will never do; after what I have heard to-night, that is impossible."

"What do you mean?" said lady Langdale, with a look of extreme solicitude.

"I mean, I mean," said she, blushing exceedingly, "I mean to be advised by this lady in every thing."

"Alas!" said Mrs. Barnet, "I can only *advise* you, for more is not in my power. This very morning, I heard that major

Barnet will soon be ordered with his regiment abroad, and nothing less than his earnest request would have induced me to come out to-night. We will not now inquire into your circumstances further : remember only, that no charge of ingratitude, which the countess may endeavour to fasten upon you, will have any weight with the virtuous and penetrating part of the community ; and that your letters to lady Langdale will always be attended to. I am told you have fine talents ; and, of course, independence is in your power, if the luxuries of this place have not enervated you."

"Try, try me, dear madam," cried the agitated girl ; "you will find I have not forgot the days of honourable poverty, nor the resources of elegant industry. I was born to no other portion, and I desire to live only by such exertions : — lady Castlehowel well knows how often she has combatted my resolution in this respect."

The two friends now left this interesting  
young

young creature to recover her spirits in repose, and returned to the company—Maria anxious to communicate to her bosom's lord the success of her mission, which was to probe the inclinations, and gain the wishes of Miss Templeman, and poor Griselda to cast round the room, again and again, her anxious eyes, to seek for him who thought not of her—to feel that, in all this various assemblage, no heart throbbed in unison with her own—and that she stood alone in a croud where every one appeared gay and happy. With these thoughts in her mind, and her eyes bent on the benevolent Maria, as she recounted her late conversation to the major, she was again accosted by the Spaniard, who, in a tone of irony, said—

“ Ah, lovely signora, in vain your beautiful eye roves in search of the object of your idolatry ; like Baal of old, your deity is either journeying or jockeying ; or he is ‘ gone to his Egyptian toy again ;’ or peradventure, he sleepeth, and must be



awakened. Would I could tear you from this unnatural heresy, even by fire !”

“ I beg you will call my servants, major Barnet,” said lady Langdale.—The major obeyed.

“ So much for a masquerade,” said Griselda, as she seated herself in the coach ; “ but it is even thus in the world of amusement ; the laugh of one moment is succeeded by the sigh of another. Doubtless I have left many an aching heart in the gay croud behind me ; but surely not many whose trials are of the same nature with my own. What can that poor girl have heard that should make her renounce my protection ? and what could that insolent man mean, by insinuating that sir Edward neglected me for another ? Perhaps his first inuendo, respecting the countess, was done on purpose to inspire with jealousy the woman whose principles he wished to undermine. Oh, what a world is this !”

These thoughts brought Griselda to her

own

own door, where she learnt from the servant, that sir Edward was but gone to the masquerade a short time before, having been disappointed of his habit; and that he wore a white domino. How he had been engaged she could form no idea, nor did she feel authorized to inquire, since there was nothing new in the circumstance; but the remembrance of the different way in which major Barnet had attended on his Maria, again struck upon her mind. By association, she remembered the address of the Spanish lady to her persecuting grandee, and thought the figure and manner of that lady resembled lady Castlehowel; and she could not help concluding that she had seized on the Spaniard under the same mistake with herself. Had sir Edward then informed the countess of his intention? and could she dare to be jealous of his intercourse with his own wife? What could captain Seymour mean, when under a similar mistake, as it now appeared, he too should

c 6

charge

charge the Spaniard with some guilty action, which, it appeared, did not apply to the person to whom it was addressed? On every side she was puzzled; and though resolving every moment she would think no more of it, yet every moment brought again the harrassing speculation, and sleep fled far from her eyes, for sorrow, in despite of resolution, would rest upon her pillow.

The following morning sir Edward made several inquiries of his lady respecting the masquerade, of which it appeared he had seen very little. On her relating the circumstance of the Spanish lady having seized the grandee, he laughed very heartily, and appeared to have no doubt of the mistake being precisely what Griselda had imagined it; adding, " You have not been long enough in the world to know that the next best thing to making a woman jealous with reason, is to make her so *without* it, lady Langdale; and that the countess intended this, is evident, or she  
would

would never have addressed me in that manner, you must be very sensible, in your hearing."

"I know not how much injury she intended me," said Griselda, "but I am sure she did me a very essential piece of service, by taking the Spaniard away, for his attentions were very distressing to me: I never wished for you so much in my life."

"Pshaw! you could easily repulse impertinence, I am certain, without me at your elbow. If Barnet chooses to go dawdling after his wife, till she doesn't know how to hobble without his assistance, it by no means follows that you and I should be ever seen cooing together like a pair of turtle doves, or yelping like a brace of chained harriers, for the amusement of the company."

"True, my dear; but it is surely possible for a man and his wife to be occasionally together without exhibiting themselves in either capacity: on this point, however, I will not insist; for the pleasure of your  
society,

society, as far as I am honoured with it, is too precious for me to risk losing it a moment by unprofitable contention ; but however childish you may think it in me, I must confess I am utterly unequal to hearing any insinuation against you, even at a masquerade."

"Who dared to insinuate any thing against me?"

"The man in the Spanish dress said, your neglect of me laid me open to the attacks of every one, and seemed to hint at some particular connexion."

The glow, which but a moment before had fired the baronet's cheek, suddenly subsided—he looked earnestly in the face of his wife, and with difficulty said,

"Umph !—well, and what next?"

"You may be certain that I treated him with that decided contempt his insolence and calumny merited ; but I could not help wishing you had been near me, as in that case I should not have suffered the painful indignation I did, since no one would  
have

have dared to excite it. Luckily for me, the Spanish lady came at that moment, and claimed him as her prize; and the next time he approached me, I desired major Barnet to lead me to my carriage, secretly resolving that I would never visit another masquerade unless you accompanied me."

"I believe your resolution was a good one; and to prove that I am as sick of the town as I perceive you are, I propose leaving it next week, and leave you to arrange matters accordingly."

As no proposition could be more acceptable to Griselda, she thanked him with the utmost cordiality; though it was but too evident neither *her* wishes nor convenience had been the cause of his conclusion; but her heart, ever solicitous to view his actions through the best medium, accepted, with gratitude, even the shadow of that tenderness which was the great *desideratum* of her hopes, and the sole object of her wishes.

---

## CHAP. II.

LADY Langdale feeling some indisposition arising from her sleepless night, and the perturbation of mind which had occasioned it, did not go out next day ; but the following morning, as soon as she had breakfasted, she drove to major Barnet's. At the moment of her entrance, Maria rose, threw herself into her arms, and exclaimed, " Oh, my dear friend, how do I rejoice to see you ! for on your decision I am determined to depend." As she spoke she burst into tears, and sobbed with such vehemence as greatly to alarm Griselda, who pressing her tenderly, begged to know what could possibly agitate her so much ?

An elderly lady, whom she justly conjectured

jectured to be the major's mother, was the only person present, and she explained the cause of Maria's agitation, by informing her, that a positive order had been given the major the night before, to embark with his regiment for the West Indies; and so very small a portion of time was allowed for this purpose, that the major was obliged to leave London on the morrow: that he had sent an express for *her* the night before to Reading, in consequence of which she had immediately come up to town, intending to take Mrs. Barnet and her little grandson back; but that she was sorry to find Maria was exceedingly bent on accompanying her husband, who, on his part, though very grateful for her affectionate intention, could not bear to think of exposing her to the dangers of the climate, and the many inconveniences of the voyage. Lady Barnet added, "that she did not doubt but her son was now calling at lady Langdale's house, to request her  
advice



advice and company at this trying juncture, but having a great deal of business on his hands, it was no wonder that he had overlooked her carriage. "But pray," continued she, "do advise this poor creature to compose herself, and remain with me and her lovely child."

"Pardon me, my lady," said Griselda, "if I cannot do that. Were I the wife of your son, *his* country should be *my* country, and *his* dangers *my* dangers, so far as my sex and his welfare could allow me to share them."

"Oh, bless you! bless you for that!" exclaimed Maria; "I knew you would feel exactly as I did. And why should I not take my poor boy, Griselda?"

"Because it would be cruel—nay, unjust to take him, since you would rob him of many advantages, and expose him to many evils, for which, at his early age, it is not possible to offer *him* an equivalent. In the consciousness of adding to the comfort

fort of your invaluable husband, *you* have more than an equivalent—for suffering, you have the recompence of love.”

“ But, dear madam,” said the old lady, weeping, “ while my heart feels as it ought, how highly you esteem my excellent son, since you advise his wife to such a sacrifice, yet I cannot help thinking that you have not taken into consideration all the evils to which both may be exposed, and how much they may be increased to each from their being together. Think of that dreadful fever, dear lady Langdale; should Maria be seized with it, what would become of my son ?”

“ And what is to become of Maria, who in parting with him, under a similar apprehension, must die a thousand deaths in fearing one? Let them go together, my lady, and endeavour to console yourself by being both parents to the lovely boy they leave behind. Had Maria been the mother of a large family, I should have thought it her duty to have remained with them ;

them ; since she is, however, enabled to devote herself to her husband, without injustice to her child, whom she leaves to the tenderness of another parent, it appears to me as positively her duty, as it must undoubtedly be her happiness, to accompany the major."

As lady Langdale ceased speaking, the major entered, and was immediately informed of her sentiments, and the consequent resolution of his lady to accompany him ; which he received with a kind of chastened satisfaction, in which the pleasure of affection was mingled with a thousand tender fears. It was a day of trial to his feelings in every way ; and never had the father and the husband, in so interesting and endearing a light, met the observation of those around him.

Griselda did not leave her long-loved friend on this eventful day ; and in the anxieties of separation, she lost the recollection of every other care. They parted at a late hour, after settling that  
whenever

whenever lady Barnet felt equal to parting, for a few months, with her beloved grandson, he should spend them with the friend of his mother.

It was impossible for such friends to part without severe suffering on both sides. The kind interposition of the major shortened and alleviated the pang, as much as it was possible. Griselda left Maria in *his* arms, but *she* returned home to a solitary fire-side herself, and *her* tears flowed unnoticed. The friend of her youth, the last of those who had shared in the pleasures of her opening life, and consoled the sorrows of its advancing day, was taken from her, and “who was left to sooth her for the loss?” She looked around—all was a blank—she had neither parents nor brethren—nor husband, said her sinking heart. But she would not permit the expression of the agony which arose at that thought. She rang the bell, and telling the chambermaid to undress her, she forced herself to assume composure; but the restless night  
which

which again succeeded had so much effect upon her appearance, that even the habitual indifference of sir Edward was awakened, and he inquired anxiously the next morning after her health, saying, "he was sorry to find she had lost her friend in such a sudden manner."

Griselda, struck with the softened tone of his voice, said, that she had indeed been a little hurt at parting with Maria, but should soon recover herself when she got into the country: adding, with a smile, "I shall see more of my doctor there, and my spirits are always at his command, you know."

"In my opinion, old Barry is the last man in the world to give any one spirits—but you know best."

"In truth, old Barry is as little my barometer as yours: the physician I allude to has acknowledged powers by all eyes but his own," she replied playfully.

"Thank you, my dear; I am *dull*, or perhaps conscious; for I did not comprehend

Send you. I have not done much for your spirits of late, I confess; but, as you say, we shall be better in the country. We will go the day after to-morrow, for I have several things to see after, before the York meeting."

"York meeting!" articulated Griselda, in a trembling voice; "are you going there, my love?"

"Oh, yes; I am obliged to go:—I have three horses entered there."

Griselda rose, saying, "I think I had better give orders for the packing of my things, as we are to set out so soon."

"Certainly," said sir Edward, with apparent *nonchalance*; but his heart smote him as the trembling steps of Griselda reached his ear, as she crossed the passage. He felt that he had inflicted a wound she was not prepared for; and he was conscious that even a wife had some right to have unwelcome intelligence softened to her. He was careless, but not cruel; and the silent acquiescence of Griselda, in bearing  
ing

ing the disappointment of her hopes, at the very moment she was exulting in them, and had forgotten the loss of her friend's, in the enjoyment of her husband's society, affected him. He followed her to her room, endeavouring to hum an air, but it was not a cheerful one. On hearing him, Griselda, in great trepidation, opened a drawer, and to hide her tears, appeared seeking earnestly for something she had lost there—sir Edward looked out of the window,

“ ’Tis rather an awkward affair losing Mrs. Barnet just now ; I was in hopes she would have been with you at the Grove, during your *accouchement*—you expected her of course ? ”

“ I never asked her,” said Griselda ; “ for I knew she would have inconvenienced herself exceedingly, rather than have refused me, and I could not be so selfish as to tax her goodness so far.”

“ I am sorry this York meeting happens so near the time of your confinement : I  
would

would give it up if it were not utterly impossible; but all my friends will be there, and I—I——”

He was interrupted by Griselda throwing herself into his arms, thanking him for his tenderness, and assuring him that though his presence was delightful to her, yet even that would fail to please her, if he found he could be happier in another place.

“Not *happier*, Griselda; but you know when one has been so unlucky as to make engagements, one must keep them; and I hope I shall be back in a very short time: do not agitate yourself so much; lie down for half an hour. I am really very sorry Mrs. Barnet is gone, but we will get Gilbert to come to you; perhaps, as you have known her so long, she will be the most agreeable nurse you can find on the approaching occasion.”

Griselda could only press the baronet's hand, and whisper her thanks; for her spirits were overwhelmed with the variety of emotions she had experienced in so



short a time. He assisted her to lie down, and then sent the housemaid to her, Mrs. Middleton being engaged in arranging her own affairs for the journey. As Griselda lay on the bed, and began to collect her scattered thoughts, she recollected poor Miss Templeman, and the disappointment she would experience in finding Mrs. Barnett, her promised protectress, had left the kingdom so suddenly, and in all probability, in the confusion of the day, without having it in her power to write her a line; at least, she knew the subject had never been mentioned the day before. Her mind, again relieved of a part of its accustomed load, expanded in benevolence towards every human being, and particularly for a young creature who appeared to her alike worthy and unfortunate.

Finding that sir Edward intended to dine at home, she endeavoured so far to overcome her extreme lassitude as to meet him at dinner, but more was absolutely out of her power; and she was therefore  
obliged

obliged to give up calling at the countess of Castlehowel's that day, or even at general Harcourt's ; but she dispatched a note to the latter, informing them of her intention of leaving town immediately.

During dinner her conversation turned much upon Miss Templeman, and sir Edward assured her that he feared any effort she could make to remove the young person, would be ineffectual, as the countess, however she might *affect* to consider her as the *protégée* of the earl, actually kept her as an attraction to her house, careless of any consequences to the poor girl, so long as her charms engaged the ignorant to lose his money to her ladyship, or the profligate to squander it, in the hope of remuneration from Emily.

"What a dreadful woman !" exclaimed Griselda ; "how could you, sir Edward, suffer me to visit such a woman ?"

"The world is made up of odd characters—hers still comes within the letter of the law, and therefore I saw no harm in

your going to her rout ; and I could have no fear of your ever being intimate with her, specious as she is : and should you prove of any service to this young person, about whom you are so much interested, you will have reason to rejoice that ever you went even to the countess of Castlehowel's masquerade."

"I would go to the Indies to save such a girl from such a woman. Why do you smile, sir Edward?"

"Because I *came* from the Indies for the same purpose, and you never discovered me."

"*C'est possible ?*—were you the bramin at the masquerade?"

"Even so. The gipsy king made more mistakes than one that night ; he mistook me for lord L——, whose wife, a lovely, though weak woman, was ruined, in every sense of the word, from her connexion with the countess, about two years ago. I borrowed the dress merely for the occasion, and left the room immediately after

after I had addressed the young person, as you might perceive."

"How very kind!—how very amiable, my dear Edward! but could we not have gone hand-in-hand in this labour of love?"

"No; I have very strong reasons for wishing to be entirely unseen in the affair. My interference would be liable to misinterpretation, and I beg that you will never mention the circumstance to any one. When you left home, I did not know that I should be disappointed of the Spanish dress, in which I intended, in the course of the evening, to have given her a hint of the dangerous predicament in which she stood; finding it was impossible to speak to her alone, I adopted the method you witnessed; but as you know I could not discover myself to you without doing so to the king of the gipsies, I left the room, and indeed the house immediately, and did not return till a late hour, as you know."

Again the heart of Griselda reproached

her, for having, for a moment, dared to suspect this idolized being; and as she fondly gazed upon him, all the hopes of love swelled in her heart, and glistened in her eyes; her tongue was eloquent in his praise, and she mistook the colour that rose to his cheek, as she poured forth the honest effusions of her affectionate admiration, for the glow of conscious worth and awakened love. Sir Edward, distressed and embarrassed; suddenly started up, said he had a thousand things to do, and precipitately left her.

The following morning was principally devoted to a farewell visit to general Harcourt and his lady; but immediately on leaving them, lady Langdale drove to the countess of Castlehowel's. She was informed the countess was not at home, and on inquiring for Miss Templeman, received the same answer; having prepared a letter for the latter, she requested the servant to give it to the young lady.

The man took the letter, looked earnestly

nestly at the address, and then returning it, said he believed Miss Templeman was not going to come back to their house ; for she had left it early in the morning, and had soon after sent a porter for her clothes (which were ready packed), and a letter to his lady, which had, he believed, occasioned her to go out in a very great hurry.

Exceedingly chagrined with this information, lady Langdale inquired if he knew to what place the porter had carried Miss Templeman's luggage ? He had no recollection—'twas some place in the city—some stage-coach house, he believed ;—he had not burthened his memory with what the fellow had said.

Griselda departed extremely troubled ; she blamed herself exceedingly for not writing the day before, and was the more pained, as, on mentioning the circumstance to sir Edward, he agreed with her in thinking that they all concurred to alarm the poor girl, and make her uncomfortable in

her situation, without suggesting any remedy for its evils; at all events, however, they agreed, that it was a step which, though it might lay her open to calumny, had been, in fact, suggested by virtue; and they hoped she would soon find some opportunity of informing lady Langdale of her present situation.

The following morning the family arose at an early hour to expedite their journey. Sir Edward entered lady Langdale's dressing-room before she was quite ready, and proposed, in a hurrying manner, that as the curricie was at the door, he should set out, and that she should follow in the chariot.

"Curricie!" exclaimed Griselda; "I did not know you had a curricie, sir Edward:" and a pang shot across her heart, which shed a livid paleness over her countenance; but desirous of hiding her emotion, she complained that rising so very early had made her feel rather unwell.

"Then I had better set out," said sir Edward;

Edward ; " and you will not hurry yourself, under the idea that I am waiting."

" Very true, my love—pray go."

Sir Edward left the room, and lady Langdale, who was really indisposed, threw herself on the bed for a quarter of an hour ; she then rose, rang her bell, which being answered by Anne, she told her she would take a cup of chocolate, and set out immediately ; and that she might inform Middleton she was ready.

" La, my lady, zhe be zet off with master, being, you know, zhe is zo subject to sickness, you know ; sir Edward said az how I must attend you, my lady, and he would take zhe in the open carriage."

" It is all very well, Anne ; I am much more used to your attendance than hers of late ; I recollect she *was* very sick when we came to London."

" Yes, my lady, but she be far worse now-a-days, as it were ; for I think she be always ill, except when she be going a visiting."



Lady Langdale was much of Anne's opinion ; but as her silence bespoke disapprobation of the subject, Anne spared any comments on the circumstance, and nothing farther passed upon it ; but on arriving at the stage where they proposed breakfasting, Griselda had the mortification to find sir Edward was gone forward ; at their *next* stage a note was given to her, saying — " That as he (sir Edward) found he had undertaken a troublesome charge in driving Middleton, he should make the best of his way to the Grove ; but desired that lady Langdale would rest as long upon the road as she found agreeable."

This note looked like apology, and was readily accepted as such, by a wife who was not only predetermined to look on the bright side of every part of her husband's conduct, but who conceived it to be her duty to submit to his pleasure, and by patient obedience insure his affections. It was not possible for a mind so sensible, and a heart so warm as Griselda's, to avoid  
comparing

comparing the degree of comfort she enjoyed with that she might enjoy, and to feel that the hopes she had once formed, from the apparent sensibility of error evinced by her husband, and the power she was certain he possessed of detaching himself from every unworthy pursuit, were in some degree blighted; yet as he had not, to her knowledge, fallen, during the whole winter, into the easy besetting sin of gaming; as she was convinced that the allurements of the countess of Castlehowel had been cast before him in vain, and it did not appear that any glaring extravagance had injured his finances, she trusted that, on the whole, she had a right to believe his character was improved; and that, though she could not flatter herself with possessing the tenderness requisite to happiness, yet that she was blest with such a portion of his esteem, as ought to preserve her from despondence, and enable her, with steady cheerfulness, to pursue the dictates of persevering affection: she looked forward to

the period which would give her a new claim on his love and his prudence; and ventured to promise herself, that the birth of his child would form a new era in the life of its father.

As lady Langdale advanced nearer home, the hope she had nurtured during her journey dilated in her heart. Nature now wore the richest livery of spring, and every breeze wafted health and fragrance on its tepid wing. To her enthusiastic eye, and vivid imagination, every opening blossom awakened some generous sentiment, some bland idea, or devout aspiration. Accustomed from her earliest youth to look through "nature up to nature's God;" devotion was to her not less the source of pleasure than the consolation of sorrow; it mingled in every feeling of her soul, but more especially in those moments of unadulterated pleasure, which arise from the contemplation of the Maker in his works.

The Grove was beautiful, and the improvements

provements she had suggested were visible, though the curtain of night was descending as she drew near the house ; and before her carriage reached the door, the last beam of light had left the neighbouring hills ; but there was a cry of joy—of welcome, that shot a beam of pleasure, such as was never felt or given by the cold voice of ceremony, through the heart of Griselda, as her faithful servants hailed the return of their adored mistress. It was, however, but the electric flash of a moment ; for her ear drank not the voice of him who could alone make it music to her heart. She received, however, the warm congratulations of all around her, with a warmth and cheerfulness which communicated that happiness she could not feel ; and though extremely fatigued, answered many a tedious inquiry with all her usual urbanity and benevolence.

Griselda had been nearly half an hour in her dressing-room, when sir Edward made his appearance, and abruptly inquired

quired "where she had left Jackall?" a favourite horse rode by the footman.

Griselda informed him, that being afraid Jackall would be somewhat overdone by so long a day's journey, she had left both him and his rider at a small inn, about eighteen miles distant, where she had heard him remark the accommodations for horses were excellent.

"You did very right, indeed, lady Langdale—very right; I should have been extremely vexed if Jackall had come forward. I concluded you would stay all night yourself on the road, or I should have given particular orders respecting him. Apropos, how are *you*? I fear not very well, for I am a good deal fatigued myself; but I am really much gratified with your care of Jackall."

"I am so thankful," replied Griselda, "to find myself once more at this charming place, that I forget my fatigue, especially now I am so happy as to meet your approbation with respect to Jackall.—By-the-bye,

the-bye, I fear you have had a troublesome journey with poor Middleton, who, I find from Mrs. Nicholson, is gone to bed."

"She is very unwell," said sir Edward, going to the door; "I will give orders for Gilbert to be sent for to-morrow; good night, my——good night, lady Langdale; I hope you will be better to-morrow."

Sir Edward drew the door after him, with a sound which precluded his hearing the faint "good night" which issued from the quivering lips of his lady, who, unable longer to restrain the anguish occasioned by the cold indifference of his manners, at a moment when her heart was animated by the purest sensations of connubial love, rekindled by the sight of home, and all the emotions it inspires, burst into a flood of tears; a cold and mournful ice-bolt seemed to shoot athwart her heart, as his steps descended the stairs, and all the vivid images which hope and fancy had so lately painted

her, for having, for a moment, dared to suspect this idolized being; and as she fondly gazed upon him, all the hopes of love swelled in her heart, and glistened in her eyes; her tongue was eloquent in his praise, and she mistook the colour that rose to his cheek, as she poured forth the honest effusions of her affectionate admiration, for the glow of conscious worth and awakened love. Sir Edward, distressed and embarrassed; suddenly started up, said he had a thousand things to do, and precipitately left her.

The following morning was principally devoted to a farewell visit to general Harcourt and his lady; but immediately on leaving them, lady Langdale drove to the countess of Castlehowel's. She was informed the countess was not at home, and on inquiring for Miss Templeman, received the same answer; having prepared a letter for the latter, she requested the servant to give it to the young lady.

The man took the letter, looked earnestly

nestly at the address, and then returning it, said he believed Miss Templeman was not going to come back to their house ; for she had left it early in the morning, and had soon after sent a porter for her clothes (which were ready packed), and a letter to his lady, which had, he believed, occasioned her to go out in a very great hurry.

Exceedingly chagrined with this information, lady Langdale inquired if he knew to what place the porter had carried Miss Templeman's luggage ? He had no recollection—'twas some place in the city—some stage-coach house, he believed ;—he had not burthened his memory with what the fellow had said.

Griselda departed extremely troubled ; she blamed herself exceedingly for not writing the day before, and was the more pained, as, on mentioning the circumstance to sir Edward, he agreed with her in thinking that they all concurred to alarm the poor girl, and make her uncomfortable in



her situation, without suggesting any remedy for its evils; at all events, however, they agreed, that it was a step which, though it might lay her open to calumny, had been, in fact, suggested by virtue; and they hoped she would soon find some opportunity of informing lady Langdale of her present situation.

The following morning the family arose at an early hour to expedite their journey. Sir Edward entered lady Langdale's dressing-room before she was quite ready, and proposed, in a hurrying manner, that as the curricle was at the door, he should set out, and that she should follow in the chariot.

"Curricle!" exclaimed Griselda; "I did not know you had a curricle, sir Edward:" and a pang shot across her heart, which shed a livid paleness over her countenance; but desirous of hiding her emotion, she complained that rising so very early had made her feel rather unwell.

"Then I had better set out," said sir Edward;

Edward ; " and you will not hurry yourself, under the idea that I am waiting."

" Very true, my love—pray go."

Sir Edward left the room, and lady Langdale, who was really indisposed, threw herself on the bed for a quarter of an hour ; she then rose, rang her bell, which being answered by Anne, she told her she would take a cup of chocolate, and set out immediately ; and that she might inform Middleton she was ready.

" La, my lady, zhe be zet off with master, being, you know, zhe is zo subject to sickness, you know ; sir Edward said az how I must attend you, my lady, and he would take zhe in the open carriage."

" It is all very well, Anne ; I am much more used to your attendance than hers of late ; I recollect she *was* very sick when we came to London."

" Yes, my lady, but she be far worse now-a-days, as it were ; for I think she be always ill, except when she be going a visiting."

Lady Langdale was much of Anne's opinion ; but as her silence bespoke disapprobation of the subject, Anne spared any comments on the circumstance, and nothing farther passed upon it ; but on arriving at the stage where they proposed breakfasting, Griselda had the mortification to find sir Edward was gone forward : at their *next* stage a note was given to her, saying — “ That as he (sir Edward) found he had undertaken a troublesome charge in driving Middleton, he should make the best of his way to the Grove ; but desired that lady Langdale would rest as long upon the road as she found agreeable.”

This note looked like apology, and was readily accepted as such, by a wife who was not only predetermined to look on the bright side of every part of her husband's conduct, but who conceived it to be her duty to submit to his pleasure, and by patient obedience insure his affections. It was not possible for a mind so sensible, and a heart so warm as Griselda's, to avoid  
comparing

comparing the degree of comfort she enjoyed with that she might enjoy, and to feel that the hopes she had once formed; from the apparent sensibility of error evinced by her husband, and the power she was certain he possessed of detaching himself from every unworthy pursuit, were in some degree blighted; yet as he had not, to her knowledge, fallen, during the whole winter, into the easy besetting sin of gaming; as she was convinced that the allurements of the countess of Castlehowel had been cast before him in vain, and it did not appear that any glaring extravagance had injured his finances, she trusted that, on the whole, she had a right to believe his character was improved; and that, though she could not flatter herself with possessing the tenderness requisite to happiness, yet that she was blest with such a portion of his esteem, as ought to preserve her from despondence, and enable her, with steady cheerfulness, to pursue the dictates of persevering affection: she looked forward to

the period which would give her a new claim on his love and his prudence; and ventured to promise herself, that the birth of his child would form a new era in the life of its father.

As lady Langdale advanced nearer home, the hope she had nurtured during her journey dilated in her heart. Nature now wore the richest livery of spring, and every breeze wafted health and fragrance on its tepid wing. To her enthusiastic eye, and vivid imagination, every opening blossom awakened some generous sentiment, some bland idea, or devout aspiration. Accustomed from her earliest youth to look through "nature up to nature's God;" devotion was to her not less the source of pleasure than the consolation of sorrow; it mingled in every feeling of her soul, but more especially in those moments of unadulterated pleasure, which arise from the contemplation of the Maker in his works.

The Grove was beautiful, and the improvements

provements she had suggested were visible, though the curtain of night was descending as she drew near the house ; and before her carriage reached the door, the last beam of light had left the neighbouring hills ; but there was a cry of joy—of welcome, that shot a beam of pleasure, such as was never felt or given by the cold voice of ceremony, through the heart of Griselda, as her faithful servants hailed the return of their adored mistress. It was, however, but the electric flash of a moment ; for her ear drank not the voice of him who could alone make it music to her heart. She received, however, the warm congratulations of all around her, with a warmth and cheerfulness which communicated that happiness she could not feel ; and though extremely fatigued, answered many a tedious inquiry with all her usual urbanity and benevolence.

Griselda had been nearly half an hour in her dressing-room, when sir Edward made his appearance, and abruptly inquired

quired "where she had left Jackall?" a favourite horse rode by the footman.

Griselda informed him, that being afraid Jackall would be somewhat overdone by so long a day's journey, she had left both him and his rider at a small inn, about eighteen miles distant, where she had heard him remark the accommodations for horses were excellent.

"You did very right, indeed, lady Langdale—very right; I should have been extremely vexed if Jackall had come forward. I concluded you would stay all night yourself on the road, or I should have given particular orders respecting him. Apropos, how are *you*? I fear not very well, for I am a good deal fatigued myself; but I am really much gratified with your care of Jackall."

"I am so thankful," replied Griselda, "to find myself once more at this charming place, that I forget my fatigue, especially now I am so happy as to meet your approbation with respect to Jackall.—By-the-bye,

the-bye, I fear you have had a troublesome journey with poor Middleton, who, I find from Mrs. Nicholson, is gone to bed."

"She is very unwell," said sir Edward, going to the door; "I will give orders for Gilbert to be sent for to-morrow; good night, my——good night, lady Langdale; I hope you will be better to-morrow."

Sir Edward drew the door after him, with a sound which precluded his hearing the faint "good night" which issued from the quivering lips of his lady, who, unable longer to restrain the anguish occasioned by the cold indifference of his manners, at a moment when her heart was animated by the purest sensations of connubial love, rekindled by the sight of home, and all the emotions it inspires, burst into a flood of tears; a cold and mournful ice-bolt seemed to shoot athwart her heart, as his steps descended the stairs, and all the vivid images which hope and fancy had so lately painted



painted on her mind, vanished with the receding sounds. It is well known that those favoured beings who are endued with genius and sensibility, which lift the soul to rapture, where others experience only tranquillity, have likewise the dreadful faculty of extracting agony from indifference; and this quality was eminently, from her very childhood, the characteristic of Griselda's mind. The care of her tender but judicious parents, had, in a peculiar manner, been applied to counteract this dangerous propensity, and their precepts, aided by her own strong understanding, her experience, and, above all, her religion, had tended to render her an amazing proof of the power of self-conquest in this respect, and the slight observer would have pronounced her a philosopher; but the germ still trembled in silence to the touch of pain or pleasure, with a sensation so acute, that it required all her reason to stem its power, even in ordinary occurrences;

occurrences ; but in moments like this, she could not suppress her emotions, she could only hide them.

Fearful that the redness of her eyes might be observed by some of the servants, whose officious affection would, on this night, be more than ordinary alert, she took the candle and retired to her own room. It was the first night she had slept there alone, for sir Edward had not adopted another room for himself till their arrival in London ; this circumstance added to that sense of solitary anguish which pressed upon her mind, and again dissolved her in tears. She however threw off her clothes as well as she was able, and did not ring till she was in bed, and therefore safe from observation, when a sense of the duty she owed herself obliged her to take a little refreshment.

The day but one following, Griselda had the satisfaction of once more seeing her dear Gilbert, who wept with joy on finding herself again at the toilet of her  
beloved

beloved mistress, and whose return excited a general whisper of pleasure and surprise. Middleton had only made her appearance once since her return, and then she was so enveloped in the trappings of an invalid, that there appeared no probability of her soon resuming the duties of her station, which, as far as concerned herself, lady Langdale was not sorry for, since she had resolved some time ago to part with her, so soon as she had completed a year's servitude; as she was convinced, in her own mind, that much of her ailment proceeded from caprice, and that she was, in many respects, a very different person to any she had been accustomed to have in her family. She had often regretted, that from lady Oxminster's not being in London during the winter, she had not been able to make some further inquiries respecting her; and had fully resolved never to take any servant again, without receiving a satisfactory account of them, from some person who had actually them in their service,

vice, though her respect for lady Elizabeth had, in this instance, led her to dispense with it.

As soon as she had recovered her fatigue, she went over to the Elms, and gladdened the hearts of all her villagers by once more appearing amongst them ; she visited her school, and had the pleasure of finding much to approve there ; she called on as many of her old pensioners as she was able, and sent for others to come and see her, while she sat down in a cottage, which she had expressly appointed to receive such helpless beggars as the peculiar hardships of the late season might force from their wretched homes, in quest of distant settlements. To see the young and the old, alike crowding round their lovely benefactress, and in silent respect or garrulous welcome, congratulating themselves on her return, was a feast to the soul of benevolence, and exhibited a picture not less beautiful in effect to the eye than the heart ; for in the group which surrounded her,

her, were seen delighted innocence and happy age, the smiles of youth, the gratitude of maturity, and the tranquillity of mild decline; while the tear of pleasure which shone in the benignant eye of Griselda, irradiated a countenance, in which virtue appeared to have assumed a visible form, for the performance of some especial deed of mercy.

Sir Edward had rode to see a neighbouring gentleman, and been prevailed upon to take an early dinner with him, on the day Griselda went over to the Elms; he was returning in the evening, and was crossing the green, with an intention to call at the Hall, and speak to Mr. Allen, when his attention was arrested by perceiving several people, in a kind of lively hurry, pressing towards one cottage. Two old men, one of whom was very lame, were just before him; two matrons, stroking down their white aprons, followed by a group of children, got before *them*, on which the lame one, lamenting his infirmity, gave an opportunity

portunity to sir Edward to inquire if there was a wedding in the village ?

“ Noa, zur,” said the man, “ but there be a much better thing—there be my leady comed hoame.”

Sir Edward gave his horse to his servant, and stept through a little gate that enclosed a few cabbages and gooseberry-bushes before the door of a cottage, at which was sat Griselda in a wicker arm-chair. A large basket of common straw-bonnets was at her feet ; and several little girls, with ruddy faces and glistening eyes, were standing round her ; she tried on the bonnets herself as they approached her, and sent each away delighted with her prize. An old woman brought her some stockings to look at, of her own knitting, which she examined, and declared to be excellent work. Every one's little history of family joys and sorrows was inquired into, and neither children nor parents forgotten ; and though each of the party chid their children, or warned their neighbours not

to

to press too near my lady, yet every one pressed nearer as they spoke; especially as, when the bonnets were taken away, the basket was found to contain a great number of little books, very like such as had been given to them before; and every one was anxious to obtain a prize, and to catch those precious words which accompanied the gift.

The little circle gave way now to make room for poor Susan Clay, who was blind, but who having been told my lady was come, sent for her grandson to lead her. The young man advanced among the croud, with the air of one who felt dignified by his burthen; but he was followed by a pretty girl, who hung behind, as if she had no right to a place in the circle, though she had the old woman's bonnet in her hand.

"My good Susan," cried Griselda, rising, and taking the withered hand which the old woman extended to feel her way, "do not think I had forgot you; I fully intended

intended calling at your door. I hear you have got an addition to your family."

The young man blushed, and beckoned the young woman, who followed, to come forward.

"Ten thousand blessings on your voice, my dear lady!" said Susan, "I knowed az you wouldn't forget us; but as they tould me, you zee, that your leadyship weren't in a condition for moving mich, I sent for Billy to bring me to you, and to zhow you his woife. Come, Sally, child, speak to my lady; I be zure she'll notis thee, when I tell her what a good child thee hast been to me all this live-long winter."

Griselda congratulated Billy on his choice, and kindly exhorted Sally to continue her attentions to his afflicted grandmother. While she continued speaking, Betty Adkins, who had withdrawn a few minutes before, elbowed her way to my lady, with a bottle in one hand, and a glass in the other; she begged pardon, but  
hoped



hoped as how madam would take a glass o' perry, it was so very warm.

Griselda tasted the liquor to the health of the young couple, but declined drinking it, *because* she was so very warm.

A voice, till now unheard, exclaimed—"I will take it, Betty, and drink all your healths with pleasure."

Every eye was turned to the elm-tree, near the garden gate; a gentleman stood there, a stranger to some, but known to the most for "his honour," and they hailed him gladly. Surprise shone in the fine eyes of his lady; the sweet serenity of her countenance rose into all the expression of glowing delight, and springing from her seat as he advanced, she seized his hand, exclaiming—"My dear Edward, what happy chance brought you here?"

"A very natural one—I was riding home, and seeing so many people assembled, inquired the cause, and found it was you."

"Ah,

“ Ah, poor things, they are all very glad to see me again.”

“ They honour themselves by loving you, Griselda,” said sir Edward, in a half whisper; “ but you really look so very lovely this evening, I should not choose to trust you in a less rustic or less innocent assembly.”

Griselda's heart throbbed, and her cheek glowed with blushes, at this new mode of address from her bosom's lord. Sir Edward felt certain that she had never looked so charming in her life before, even during the early period when he considered her with the eyes of a youthful lover, and the confusion she betrayed on his being discovered to her, gave a novelty to the expression of her tenderness, that affected him in a manner surprising to himself: his heart, previously softened by the expression of artless sympathy and admiration in those around him, and elevated by the contemplation of virtue in its fairest form, was open to the impressions of respect and tenderness; and

his eyes, endowed by nature with more than common eloquence, as they gazed on Griselda, now told, in their rapid glance, a tale she had not listened to for years.

Fearful of deceiving herself, and conscious how very little she ought to rely on transitory emotions, she endeavoured to check the sense of pleasure thus unexpectedly awakened; but the ideas it called forth were too delightful to be relinquished. She asked sir Edward, in a rallying tone, if he thought her handsome enough to be worth guarding home? and on his replying in the affirmative, directed Billy Clay to order her carriage there, and to dismiss sir Edward's servant with the horses.

As the carriage advanced, the little croud, who had been struck with silence at the appearance of sir Edward, began to renew their blessings and their praises; and just as the door closed, the lame old man cried out—"God bless your honour, and send you a son the image of his mother!"

"Thank you, my honest friend," said  
sir

sir Edward ; “ take this guinea for your wish ; you could not have made a better.”

The women however declared, as the chariot drove off, that they hoped his honour's heir would be like himself, for to be sure, a more properer, handsomer sort of a gentleman could not be found in all his majesty's dominions.

From the Elms to the Grove was the shortest drive Griselda ever remembered, for the grounds vanished as sir Edward pointed out the closing rays of evening that gild them ere they fled ; again the language of taste, and the tones of love, animated his tongue ; and again hope sprung in his Griselda's heart and danced in her eyes.

As he handed her from the chariot, he guarded her steps with a degree of tender solicitude, which though commonly shewn to ladies in her circumstances, she had never been blest with before. The tear of gratitude glistened in her eye, and

she pressed his hand with fervency, nor relinquished it till she was seated in their usual sitting-room. The exertions of the day, though delightful, had been rather too much for her, and she became pale and faint; sir Edward, alarmed, called aloud for water, holding her tenderly in his arms, afraid to move even to ring the bell; Griselda assured him she should soon be better; but added, softly, as she reclined her cheek on his shoulder—"I shall not desire to be well while my sickness can procure consolation so precious to my heart."

"Ah, Griselda, there is reproach in that praise! but I ought to submit to it. To *it*, did I say? ah, to how much more! but spare me this moment—it is perhaps the most *eventful* of my existence."

"Spare you, my love! ah, if you could read every thought of your Griselda's heart, you then, and *then* only, would learn the extent of her love, her confidence; would learn her boundless gratitude for every  
proof

proof of your tenderness, and her solicitude to render your affection as permanent as it is precious."

Sir Edward was just opening his lips, as if to make a reply worthy such a profession, when a servant informed him that a person in the hall wished to speak with him immediately. He changed colour, and was evidently vexed and embarrassed ; but this did not excite any surprise in Griselda, who was herself much disconcerted at the interruption, and who knew his temper to be generally irritable ; but she was exceedingly hurt on his return, to be informed that he was obliged to set out for York early in the morning ; for although it wanted more than a week to the races, yet some gentlemen he had agreed to meet were already there ; and besides, he must be present when his horses were entered.

As he appeared really disturbed, Griselda, though much hurt at the circumstance, endeavoured to reconcile his mind, by observing,

serving, that the sooner he went, perhaps, the sooner he might return.

"I cannot return till the races are over, you know."

"True; but you will probably do so as *soon* as they are, which would not have been the case if you had not gone some days before, it is so long a journey. As it is, my love, I have no doubt you will be at home before the arrival of that little stranger, who will either afford a new existence to your Griselda, or take away——"

"I have no doubt of your doing extremely well; do not allow yourself to think of any thing else; but I cannot talk; I have a great many things to order, and I must set off at four in the morning, or soon after, so you must excuse me wishing you good-night."

Griselda struggled to suppress the tear that rose to her eye, and said only, with a trembling voice—" *Promise* that you will  
bid

me farewell in the morning, and I will release you."

"It will be very foolish to disturb you at such an early hour."

"I shall not be *disturbed*, my love; I beg that you will just look in upon me to say *farewell*; I will not hinder you a single moment, only bid me *farewell*."

Sir Edward promised, and they parted for the night; but repose forsook alike the pillow of the husband who forsook, and the wife who was forsaken.



---

### CHAP. III.

SIR Edward did *not* forget his promise of bidding his lady adieu in the morning, but it was performed in a manner which clearly proved that the breach would, to him, have been more welcome than the performance; the hurried manner in which he spoke, and the almost ghastly paleness of his countenance, as the light fell upon it, when he drew back the curtain, alarmed Griselda with the idea of his illness; but on his repeated assurances that he was perfectly well, it struck her forcibly that his engagements at York were, at this time, extremely unpleasant to him; and she endeavoured, with the utmost tenderness,

to

to assure him that she would make herself perfectly easy during his absence, and would write to him, as much as her health would permit. Sir Edward made no other reply than by pressing her hand, which he held between his own, which trembled exceedingly, and then rushed out of the room, with a loud and precipitate step, as if anxious to dispel the gloom of his mind by the bustle and confusion of his departure.

With a disturbed, yet not unhappy mind, Griselda listened till the sound of the wheels and the horses' feet died on her ear; she then gave herself up to the idea that she was *indeed beloved*; and though the many peculiarities of sir Edward's manners, and the embarrassments arising from previous connexions, or improper acquaintances, had sometimes led him to partial estrangements, yet that he retained a proper sense of her affection, and would (now they were returned into the country) become more domesticated, and of course more wise and happy. She could not re-

flect on his uneasiness without pain, neither could she believe herself to be so far an object of interest, with a husband so fondly beloved, without rejoicing in the hopes thus tenderly awakened. In dreams of this nature she dropt asleep, and happily did not awake till a late hour, when she arose much refreshed, and rang for Anne, who was her general attendant since her return ; the bell was, however, answered by Gilbert, who entered with a disordered air, and whose eyes appeared as if she had been lately in tears.

Griselda inquired if she had heard any bad news ?

“ I have only heard, my lady, that the miller’s wife, who was married about the same time you were, has got a fine boy this morning.”

“ There is nothing *bad* in that, Gilbert.”

“ Certainly *not*, my lady ; for they are both doing as well as possible, I believe.”

“ I am heartily glad to hear it, for your looks made me fear they had not ; I wish,  
however,

however, you would go over, my good Gilbert, and see if Sally wants any thing. Pray tell Nicholson to let her have every thing that will make her comfortable; I will ride over to-morrow, and see her myself."

Glad to be dismissed, Gilbert immediately left the room, and lady Langdale went into her dressing-room. The footman who brought in breakfast set it down in such a bustling manner, and with such evident perturbation, that he overturned the cream upon his lady's gown. Anne was sent for, and appeared with eyes yet more swollen than Gilbert's, and the moment she approached her mistress, she burst into an agony of tears, and ran out of the room.

"What is the meaning of all this?" cried lady Langdale, in amaze; "I have slept very late, but surely if sir Edward had returned, I should have heard him.—William," said she earnestly, "tell me the *truth*; is your master returned?—has any thing happened to him?"

"He is *not* returned, madam," said the man, "nor has any thing happened; but—"

"But *what*, William?"

"I will send Mrs. Nicholson, my lady," said the man, vanishing as he spoke, though with an air of the utmost respect, blended with sorrow.

The heart of Griselda beat violently, but she knew not what to fear; the assurance William had given her of his master's safety, so nearly included all other things of great moment to her, that she endeavoured to compose herself, although convinced that some one she was interested for must be either dying or dead. Gilbert she had seen was well, Mr. Allen was so the night before, and besides, Anne could not be crying for *him*. Middleton now crossed her mind; surely nothing had happened to *her* of great consequence: as the thought glanced over her mind, the housekeeper entered, with a face in which marks of confusion and sorrow were equally conspicuous with those worn by the rest.

"My

"My good Nicholson," exclaimed lady Langdale, "I beg you will tell me all about this sad affair immediately; you are all afraid of hurting me, I perceive; but indeed I must *know*, and as I am pretty well this morning, I can hear any thing you have to tell me."

Mrs. Nicholson answered only by her tears.

"It must be Middleton that is dead," said Griselda; "for Heaven's sake do not keep me in suspense!"

"Dead! she *dead*, my lady? a wicked wretch!" screamed the good woman, recovering her faculties with her indignation; "no, indeed, she be not dead; I wish to God she had died, or been hanged as high as Haman, or burnt for a heretic, or drowned for a witch, or any thing in the varsal world, before ever she had comed into this house, for its all *her* doings, depend upon it, my lady. I ha known sir Edward from his birth, my lady, and wild as he was, and all that, he never was the  
man

man that would agone to have hardened his heart against such a lady as you, and atook up with such a scrub as she, that he wasn't, if she hadn't a wheedled him, an got him, as 'twere, to have gone off with her."

Mrs. Nicholson's harangue might have continued much longer, had not her auditor, at this moment, dropt senseless from the chair on which she sat ; the affrighted informer caught her as she fell, and shrieked aloud for help ; the room was filled in a moment, for many anxious hearts were already on the staircase ; but neither the loudness of their lamenting, nor the fumes of hartshorn and burnt feathers, offered on every side, restored life to the pallid cheek of their death-struck mistress. She was conveyed to her own bed, and her surgeon sent for, before the least sign of life appeared, in answer to their cares, and the whole house became a scene of sorrow, those only can conceive who have witnessed the love a pious and benevolent mistress

mistress never fails to inspire among the servants of her mansion in the country.

At length Griselda opened her eyes, as poor Gilbert, who had just returned from the mill, entered the room; the bitter grief of that faithful creature, as she beheld the altered countenance of her lady, recalled to her wandering ideas some sense of the misery which awaited her; she beckoned Gilbert to her side, and made a motion for the rest to leave the room—a request immediately but reluctantly obeyed; for in such cases, to do nothing is the only burden which affection feels to be a task it is unequal to perform.

Many deep and successive sighs burst from the agonized heart of Griselda, as she leant her head on the bosom of poor Gilbert, whose fast-falling tears appeared to supply the want of those her unhappy mistress could not shed. Those only who have known what it is to feel the bitter conviction of being deceived where they have most trusted, of having nursed hope  
through



through a *thousand* sollicitudes, and at length received *désespoir* as the reward of their labours; they only, who feel the sting of insult added to the injustice of injury, can imagine the heart-rending sensations which shook the frame of Griselda; but the religious woman, who includes, in the warmth of her personal attachment, that purer sollicitude, that holy anxiety, which extends its cares for the beloved object beyond this world, who feels sin as the severest sorrow, and who has a thousand times, in humble prostration at the throne of grace, with ardent prayers and streaming eyes, sought mercy for the *soul* of her husband, she *only* can fully enter into the poignant anguish which afflicted Griselda at this awful juncture, and for a short time appeared completely to overpower her, though she struggled to subdue the violence of her emotions, and to bear it with that fortitude she conceived to be her duty. Like every other person in affliction, she was ready to believe this was the worst that could

could possibly have befallen her, and that even the death of sir Edward would have been as much less afflictive to her, as it would have been more honourable for himself. From these dreadful thoughts she was forcibly torn, by that attention to herself which suffering inevitably produces; she became soon extremely ill; and Gilbert, with gratitude, hailed the arrival of the surgeon, who had been sent for during her fainting. A new species of alarm now spread through the family, and each domestic was ready to reproach the other for not concealing their trouble, and subduing their indignation; a thousand good resolutions were adopted, respecting silence, now its observance could answer no end, which were followed by incessant prayers, and fruitless lamentations, which arose to agony, on the surgeon's declaration that their lady was in imminent danger, and ordering more medical assistance to be procured immediately.

After many hours of extreme suffering,  
lady

lady Langdale became the mother of a lovely boy, whose appearance did not indicate his having sustained any injury from its being premature.

The mother beheld her child, and wept abundantly : this relief to her overcharged heart was the first gift which maternal tenderness bestowed on one so peculiarly calculated to receive, in their fullest force, its sacred impressions ; and sorrowful as was the gift, and bitter as were the tears she shed, yet their effect was salutary, and none dared to controul them. A tender and mournful silence succeeded the distressing alarm, so lately experienced ; and every eye that gazed on the new-born heir of two ancient houses, was dimmed with a tear, and every tongue that welcomed the unconscious babe, faltered with a sigh, as it pronounced him like his *cruel* father.

As bodily ease was restored, so mental anguish increased ; Griselda awakened from one species of suffering to another, less acute, but far more hopeless ; and scarcely  
could

could she forbear complaining that life was prolonged, under circumstances that appeared to render it so little worth acceptance. But these murmuring thoughts were stifled in their birth; accustomed, in every affliction, to cast the eye of faith towards that mercy-seat from whence cometh all release from sorrow, or all strength to sustain it, she endeavoured to breathe the pure prayer of humble supplication, as well as the exhausted state of her frame and spirits would permit: the faint cry of her child was the answer of Heaven to her heart—it was felt in every nerve—it was acknowledged in every sentiment of her soul. The still small voice of love, the imperious demand of duty, alike commanded her to *live*. The agonies of a forsaken lover, the resentment of an injured wife, were forgotten; the mother and the Christian felt the full force of those sacred obligations, and endeavoured, by every possible means, to attain that peace, and preserve that health, which was necessary for the preservation.

preservation of life, in so fragile a tement as that of the little supplicator who depended on her protection.

But although the heart of this excellent woman was supported by religion, and warmed with maternal tenderness, it was impossible for her to force from her mind the bitterness of that trouble which so cruelly afflicted her, and there were moments, when the remembrance of the cruel deceit practised on her, awoke grief almost to phrenzy ; she saw how completely she had been lulled into security by the apparent openness of sir Edward's conduct, respecting the countess, and yet blamed her own blindness in not having perceived a connexion, which doubtless was known to the lowest menial in her family. The recollection of Middleton's confusion, on her unexpected return, rose to her mind ; of sir Edward's illness, which she could not now doubt was either feigned, or occasioned by her unexpected and unwelcome return ; and, above all, the murmur that  
rose

rose to his lips of "dear Sally," flashed on her remembrance, and awakened a pang beyond a name. From these agonizing thoughts, she endeavoured to take refuge in the belief that sir Edward had, at least, left her with regret—that his conduct, the evening before, had evinced that agitation which is the result of suffering, under a sense of guilt, and which leaves the heart open to the impressions of penitence. As her own opened to this sense of meliorated sorrow, she would take her baby to her breast, and as she gazed upon him, fancy that he would be the medium of restoring his erring parent to virtue and to her; and while, with streaming eyes, she now looked to him, and now to Heaven, as if beseeching mercy for the father, and imploring blessings on the child, she regretted that she had not strength immediately to follow sir Edward, to present to him his innocent offspring, and, in the moment of parental sensibility, to seal her own reconciliation. Her mind, humble from principle,

ciple, and gentle from disposition, though tremblingly alive to the insult, as well as injury she had sustained, from a conduct which she had believed her husband incapable of as a *gentleman*, was little susceptible of vindictive emotions, or rather, of nourishing them; for not to feel them was impossible; and she was infinitely more anxious to reclaim her wanderer, than to punish him for his desertion.

Several days passed of the first period of her confinement, in such perfect silence on her part, that poor Gilbert, who saw how fully and how painfully her thoughts were employed, did not venture to intrude upon her by speaking more than was absolutely necessary; but becoming fearful of her tendency to melancholy, she at length ventured to speak of the child, and was delighted to see it was a subject which would call forth the observations of its afflicted mother, who saw how much her worthy attendant was anxious to enliven her; and ever attentive to consider the comforts of those

those around her, for the sake of her affectionate nurse, she exerted herself, and inquired how she had found the young woman at the mill, and her babe, the eventful morning she had visited them ?

Gilbert, delighted to hear her speak in her usual tone, answered, unwittingly—  
“ Oh dear, my lady, 'twould have done you good to have seen her, she had every thing so neat and comfortable like ; and there was Betty Robson a-giving her some caudle, as good as your own, just as I went in ; and Richard himself had got the child laid on his knee, and he looked as proud as a prince, and so tender over his wife, poor soul ! he would needs have Betty take the boy, for he fancied nobody could feed her with the caudle but himself.”

Griselda's comment on this simple scene was a sigh, that seemed to rend the very bosom it proceeded from. Gilbert, shocked at her own imprudence, left the room to conceal her tears, and those of her lady flowed freely in her solitude ; thus condemned



demned to envy the happiness of her rustic dependents, and sigh, in vain, for that intercourse of tender sympathy which is the best boon of nature, whether fortune has placed us in the mountain or the vale of life.

As Griselda thought on Richard's love for his boy, she was naturally led to think on what sir Edward's feelings, towards *his*, might be; and began to think that the messenger who had been dispatched to him with the information, ought, by this time, to have returned: on ringing the bell to inquire, she found that Gilbert had not sent any person till two days after the child was born, and of course it was not possible for the man to have returned.

"But why, Gilbert, did you not send immediately to acquaint sir Edward?"

"Why, my lady, for one thing—there was not one creature, either in the house or the Elms, that would budge a foot after him, and I was in such great anxiety about you, that I didn't think much about any thing

thing else, and so, some how, nobody got off."

"But you know I requested it, Gilbert, as soon as I was able to speak."

"True, my lady, and I was wrong, as far as that went; but I was thinking more for you than you did for yourself, being that it is always your way to be considering for other folks, if so be you were a-dying. For my part, I cannot think there is any occasion to think much about sir Edward: when a man chooses to attend his mistress's lying-in, instead of his lawful lady's, I think it's a pity he should be told that he has a heir at all."

As Griselda laid her cheek on the pillow, Gilbert saw it suffused with such a deadly paleness, that she again reproached herself bitterly with having spoken so freely; knowing, however, that, to use her own expression, there was no end of her lady's love for sir Edward, she concluded that her expression of anger towards him was more painful than any information she

VOL. II. F could

could give respecting Middleton; and therefore, by way of softening her philippic, she added, in a lower tone—

“To be sure, as soon as ever I saw her come down stairs, with her great Ingee shawl about her, thinks I, all is not right with that young woman; and when I got an inkling how master drove her down, and all that, and what clothes and fal-lals she had got, and what airs she gave herself, I was very uneasy; and I never seed her but once ater I came to understand all this; and I looked pretty sharp after her, and I saw enough to satisfy me she’ll get her bed in a couple of months, at farthest: so it’s plain she must have been the most forwardest, impudentest thing that ever was born, and must ha done her best to seduce my master, as it were, from the very first of her coming into the house.”

“Leave me, Gilbert,” said Griselda faintly. Gilbert could not leave her, for she looked paler than the sheet which covered her,

“I dare

"I dare not, cannot leave you, my dear lady," said she, sinking on her knees by the bedside; "pray, pray pardon me, if I have said too much; but indeed it is bad for you to lie moping, and never speaking, on a thing which must needs run in your head, both day and night; and if you could bring yourself to talk about this sad affair, my lady, though only to a servant, it would be better for you. Dear heart, if you had had your mother, or his honour, or even your old aunt, to speak to, and complain to, 'twould be something; but you have nobody, and your poor heart is breaking; I see it is, and I cannot help speaking; no, not—not if you are ever so angry."

The poor woman burst into such an agony of tears, that Griselda roused herself to comfort her; she assured her that she was mistaken, in supposing that her silence proceeded from the indulgence of sorrow, and appealed to her, if she had not constantly taken the food that was thought ne-

cessary for her ; she assured her that in silence her mind regained strength and composure ; but that there was nothing which tended to destroy those good effects so much, as hearing any thing, either directly or indirectly, against sir Edward ; she therefore trusted that Gilbert, as her oldest servant, would not only controul any desire to reflect upon him herself, but would likewise influence the other servants, in such a manner as to preserve their obedience and respect, in case of sir Edward's sudden return.

Gilbert, with many tears and protestations, promised to do her best ; but her heart made a silent appeal as to the impossibility of the thing ; she however withdrew, after giving her lady a little gruel, and laying her only comfort within her view and reach. The sensations of the mother, as she apostrophized her sleeping boy, with feelings again awakened to all the peculiar sorrows of her situation, cannot be described ; but, alas ! there are but too many  
who

who can imagine them—who know “how sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is” to feel dishonour in another’s sin, and to pluck the fruit of despair from the scion of hope.

When Griselda had somewhat recovered from this distressing conversation, she began to feel a little surprise that Gilbert had not mentioned receiving any inquiries from the neighbouring gentry, and was ready to conclude that her cares, as a nurse, had precluded her, from attending as she ought. On asking who had sent, she was informed that a man had just arrived with a letter from Miss Anne Holcroft; but he was the only person who had been near the house, except one or two servants, “who had called of their own accord, as ’twere, just to pick up what they could.”

As Griselda was now able to sit up for an hour, she opened the note from Miss Anne, and read as follows:—

“ Miss Anne Holcroft is extremely sorry to learn that sir Edward Langdale has found, in a servant of *her* recommending, a woman of whom dear lady Langdale ‘ *must* be jealous.’ Miss A. H. assures lady L. that it is extremely painful to her, to be obliged to blend her condolences for the falsehood of the baronet with her congratulations for the birth of his heir, but begs leave to assure lady L. that as soon as she has removed to the Elms, or any other separate abode, she will have the pleasure of paying her respects in person; an intention in which her mother begs leave to unite.”

---

The affected kindness, and covert malice of this note, was duly appreciated by lady Langdale ; and the insolent taunt, conveyed by using her own words, she deemed such an affront, that if the respectable name of lady Holcroft had not been introduced

duced in it, she would not have condescended to answer it at all. Unable to hold a pen herself, she directed Gilbert to give a line in answer; and observing her mutter to herself, as she read the passage about the Elms, "Aye, every body is in a tale," she inquired what she meant, for she had not quite comprehended that part of the note.

"Dear me," said Gilbert, "why now I do not comprehend any thing else, my lady; it means, what all the country expects of course, that as soon as your ladyship is able, you will go and live at the Elms, or else down in Yorkshire, and so quite clear your own character at once, which, as we tell every body, you can do fully."

"*My* character?" said Griselda, gasping for breath, "clear *my* character!"

"Oh dear, my lady, don't look so frighten'd like; you know we all know, to our sorrow, that you were as ignorant as the babe unborn."



" Pray tell me what you mean, and *all* you mean, dear Gilbert, but do not keep me in suspense ; I will bear it all with calmness, I promise you I will."

" Well, my lady, the whole country round, it seems, have took it in their heads to believe that your ladyship knew all about sir Edward's connexion with Middleton, and winked at it, as it were ; they say ladies in London often do such things, but it was never expected that you would have fallen into such an error ; for it is always supposed, that when wives connive at such things in their husbands, there is something very bad in their own conduct."

Griselda observed, the conclusion was certainly a very natural one, and told Gilbert to proceed.

Deceived by her apparent calmness, the poor woman knew not that every word she uttered was a dagger to the heart of Griselda ; and being anxious to place her dear mistress in the fairest point of view to the neighbourhood, at whose conduct she had been  
been

been equally angry and distressed, she was not sorry for an opportunity of eclairsissement, and continued to say—

“To be sure, ma’am, I find there is a great number of people, indeed all that are good for any thing, who say they are quite certain your ladyship was completely deceived, and that as soon as ever you are able, you will clear yourself from this cruel imputation, by separating, for ever, from sir Edward; they say, *you* are good and virtuous, and will scorn to share the bed of the adulterer, and will prove yourself worthy the name you once bore. Those were the very words of old lady Goodwin, in a large party at sir John Gooch’s, last Tuesday; and sir John, and my lady, and captain Hutton, all joined in it; and said, as soon as ever you left the Grove, they would visit you, go where you would; and their houses should all have been offered to you, if your own had not happened to have been the nearest: but there were people in the room that pretended to laugh, and

say you would remain where you were, and had the impudence to lay wagers about you; and that old wretch, lord Linton, said you knew who you went to meet at the masquerade; but there was such a buzz against him, he was glad to hold his tongue; and he, like many others, agreed that your separation from sir Edward would prove that you *had* been deceived, and all that. And poor Mr. Allen has been quite miserable, and plagued to death with inquiries about you at the Elms, because he had received no orders to prepare the house for you; but now, my dear lady, I hope that you will give them."

Griselda replied by desiring to be put to bed immediately, and then left to consider on what she should do.

Surely, if the children of sorrow, who have exhausted every arrow in the quiver of misfortune, could each be questioned which was armed with the most *barbed* dart, which inflicted the *severest* wound, and imposed the *cruelest* pang, they would  
all,

all, with one accord, declare, there was no misery so terrible as *infamy*, no agony so bitter as *disgrace* !

The mind of Griselda had hitherto sustained her with a firmness which had repelled the attacks upon her health, which grief must otherwise have made upon her, in a situation so very critical, and the same sense of duty still pervaded her mind ; but the extreme embarrassment in which she now stood, by presenting, on either hand, the most distressing alternative she could imagine, produced an agitation it was impossible to sooth, and which spread, like lightning, through her weakened frame. In the course of a few hours she was in a state of considerable fever ; and perceived, with infinite regret, that the nutrition nature had liberally supplied to that babe, who was more than ever become her only comfort, was now denied. A night of increasing anguish, disturbed by the continual wailings of the infant sufferer, completed what the morning had begun ; and

her medical attendant pronounced her in a milk fever, of the most dangerous tendency, and required the most skilful assistance in the country, to ward off the approaching symptoms; but though every help was procured, she soon became delirious, and the fever attained its most menacing appearance.

That this disease originated in the mind, was so very evident, that her physicians applied themselves, with peculiar solicitude, to the restoration of her reason, that it might become the medium of tranquillizing her disordered frame; and for this purpose, they lost no time in summoning her only relative, general Harcourt, whose presence, it was hoped, in case of recovery, would be a comfort to her, and, if the worst happened, was the person now most interested in her precious remains. Gilbert privately dispatched a messenger to lady Elizabeth Osborne, well knowing that her lady loved *her* more than any other female friend, since the departure of Mrs. Barnet;

Barnet ; and these worthy people, together with the general's lady, soon assembled round the bed of the unconscious invalid, who, for several days, did not seem to have any perception of the increased number of her attendants, nor in anywise to distinguish the ladies from her other nurses ; but the sight of the general was, after a time, observed to make an impression upon her ; and when one day he had so far overcome his feelings, as to sit down by her bedside a few minutes, she looked wistfully in his face, and said, in a low voice—

“ You are come to take me, my father ? ”

“ Yes, my love,” said the general, suppressing his emotions.

“ Then we will take my little Edward, and all go together,” said she, endeavouring to rise ; “ but when, *when*,” added she, with extreme anxiety, “ will you send me for my husband ? Heaven will not be  
heaven

heaven without him, let lord Linton say what he pleases."

The general shook his head with inexpressible grief.

"I see what you mean," said Griselda; "yes, he was very wicked at one time; he cut my heart in pieces, and gave it to the vultures; they are all gnawing it yet; but you know I have washed him all over in my tears, and made him white as the mountain snow; and when we take him with us, there will be joy in heaven, my father, for the lost sheep will be found—the penitent will be accepted."

The general, unable to reply, rose with a thousand agonizing sensations swelling at his heart; but the judicious, though deeply-affected ladies, seized this dawning of reason, to sooth and comfort her, and at length succeeded to such a degree, as to induce her to swallow some medicines they had hitherto been unable to persuade her to take; and they had soon the satisfaction  
of

of observing their salutary effects, as, in the course of the evening, she recognised Gilbert, whose excessive grief, during this afflicting period, had been such as to oblige the ladies to keep her, for the most part, out of the room, but whose returning hope inspired her with new powers of attending on her idolized lady.

When the fever had once given way to the efforts of medicine, the recovery of Griselda, though slow, appeared certain; and the pleasure she appeared, to take, in finding herself surrounded by friends of the highest respectability, at a time when she thought every one she could esteem had deserted her, contributed essentially to her recovery. Not a word was now uttered in her presence, that could tend to disturb the melancholy calm, which appeared to have succeeded the intense anguish, which, like a smothered flame, had for a while consumed her reason, and threatened her existence.

But this calm was of short duration ; re-  
turning



turning health renewed the power to suffer ; and she again found, that to return to life was to return to wretchedness ; that the sorrows produced by sin are a blight that spreads over every resource of mind, and poisons every spring of consolation ; and that she was again called to weigh that dreadful balance between her husband and the world, which had so lately overwhelmed her. To abandon that long-cherished hope of his reformation, which had hitherto supported her, that duty to which she had solemnly devoted herself at the altar, and which she still felt herself capable of performing, however severe and arduous the task, was a line of conduct at which every feeling of her heart, and even her principles, revolted. According to her *own* perceptions, the tie still existed which bound her to the obedience she had promised ; and she conceived, that forsaking sir Edward, could, in no way, contribute to his reform, but might render her negatively accessary to further guilt : yet  
to

to make herself a mark for the "slow unmoving finger of Scorn to point at," to tear from her the virtuous few, who yet remained to console and support her, to wound, in her conduct, the pure morality, and the blessed religion, she had hitherto professed and confided in, to become a stain on the spotless honour of her family, and give occasion of future reproach from her child—all these bitter reflections, poured into her ear in every different form, by the arguments of the general, and the suggestions of lady Elinor, and seconded, in some degree, by her own judgment, were altogether so bitterly heart-rending, that if her troubled spirit had not found refuge at that throne of grace, where only every thought of her heart could be opened, and tears for her erring husband flow without reproof, she must have become a prey to the deepest despondency, or the most ungovernable grief.

As Griselda was one morning ruminat-  
ing

ing on the sole subject of her thoughts, and preparing again to parry the attacks of the general, whose departure she dreaded would take place every day in anger, and whom yet every day made more dear, and of more importance to her, lady Elizabeth entered her room, and taking her hand with more than common tenderness, said—

“ My dear lady Langdale, during the many conversations I have witnessed between you and the general, I have forborn to take any part, being fearful of increasing your trouble, by giving you two persons, instead of one, to contend with ; but I wish you to understand, that my silence did not proceed from any partiality to my unworthy relative, whom it is my earnest hope you will, in justice to yourself, abandon to the ignominy he merits, so far as is in your power. I would advise you to take up your abode with me for some time ; I am an old maid, but my house shall be rendered commodious to your nursing,

nursling, for whom I have provided a more substantial proof of my good will."

"Most thankfully will I fly with you, my best friend," said Griselda, kissing the hand she held; "but if sir Edward should come——"

"My doors are *shut* to sir Edward Langdale for ever; he has disgraced his name, and dishonoured his kindred. I may be told that the world holds such errors venial; but the world and me have parted long ago, and I despise it, while *it* laughs at me; besides, bad as it is, the sense of the neighbouring country proves that *this* species of insolent depravity is not tolerated even in men of fashion; and how a woman of virtuous principles can palliate the wickedness, or endure the *insult* of it, I cannot conceive. Pardon me, lady Langdale, but, as the general says, in a case where the heart feels so much, the tongue will be warm; this is an error that ought not to be forgiven."

"I do not mean to palliate guilt," replied

plied Griselda, a deep glow suffusing her pallid cheek, "nor do I hold communion with infamy. The world judges from what it sees, and reasons from circumstances that lie on the surfaces of actions; hence the same crime is punished with severity, in some cases, and escapes even censure in others; but surely it is the province and duty of near connexions, to investigate with patience, to mitigate with tenderness, every error in those with whom they are allied, and never force them from the paths of virtue by severity, while one avenue remains open by which affection may beckon their return. I do not speak of my *feelings*, in this place, but of my *duties*, and they force me to declare, that I cannot, in conscience, live in any house where my husband is proscribed."

"Do you mean to remain in this house when sir Edward returns with his mistress?" said lady Elizabeth, with an air of chilling haughtiness.

"Certainly *not*; if sir Edward were capable

able of offering me *such* an insult, he would *force* me to abandon him ; but I am persuaded he is utterly incapable of it, and on that persuasion I act ; if I should prove wrong, the misery of finding myself deceived will surely be a sufficient punishment. I do not presume to offer my own judgment as a standard ; I would not *condemn* the wife who differed from me in her mode of conduct, in such a case ; and I have weighed, as I ought, all that can be offered against it ; but the result of every deliberation is, a resolution to abide by my husband, and to endeavour to regain his affections, thus securing to myself and child our natural protector."

" Infatuated woman !" said lady Elizabeth, melting into tears ; " you force me to abandon you, at a time when you are become exceedingly dear to me. You prefer, to friends who would be parents to yourself and child, a man, who, if he returns, will do it to strip you of your inheritance, that he may enrich a prostitute,  
and

and beggar your son ; who will despise your humility, mock your distress, and trample on your affection ; a man on whom tenderness has no influence, gratitude no claim ; a man that——”

“ Spare me, oh spare me !” faintly articulated Griselda, and fell senseless on her chair.

Lady Elizabeth, alarmed, procured instant assistance, and lady Langdale was restored, but was too unwell to leave her couch for the rest of the day. The general and the ladies, alike convinced that all endeavours to move the resolution she had adopted could only be attended with much pain, and no success, resolved to leave the Grove, not enduring to be considered visitants at the house of a man they despised. In parting with them, Griselda felt as if all that was valuable on earth was now completely taken away ; and she deemed herself not only an isolated, but a despised outcast from the society in which she had long been considered a jewel  
of

of the first water. The health of her child, which had not been good since he had lost his natural food, called happily upon her attention at this period of suffering, and prevented her from indulging in those agonizing reflections, which were ever ready to absorb her mind, and sink her into a state of the most deplorable dejection.

---

#### CHAP. IV.

LADY Langdale was just in her judgment, when she concluded that grief and shame had been the prevailing sensations of her husband, at the moment of his departure; and however he might affect to disguise, or endeavour to stifle them, still were they the companions of his journey; and the effects they produced on his temper were  
of



of a nature to render his society extremely unpleasant, even to his unprincipled companion, although her mind was bent on a purpose which rendered her apparently patient under his ill-humour, and accommodating to his wishes.

From the very first day of her arrival at the Grove, Middleton, who united to all the shrewdness of native cunning, that boldness of design which is awakened by necessity, and that hardness of heart which arises from a renunciation of religion, perceived, as she thought, the possibility of rendering herself an object of desire to her master, since she perceived he was an idle man, with an active mind, and was indifferent to a wife whose beauty would have attracted him in any other situation, but whose character Middleton finding, in every respect, so totally different to all the ladies she had ever known, or liked, she concluded must be very disagreeable to sir Edward also ; “ And when,” said the waiting-woman, internally, “ a man cannot

not possibly like such a hum-drum creature of a wife; and has a pretty woman always before him, how can he help falling in love with her, I wonder?"

Middleton was the daughter of a little farmer who lived in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Spencer, at the time that lady professed atheism, and had the goodness to disseminate her tenets, in every possible way, among the admiring multitude. From her maid they reached the ears of Sally Middleton, at the very time her whole mind was absorbed in reading a novel she had hid in her butter-basket, which was one of the many flaming compositions issued from the press, about the period of the French revolution, to combine the doctrines of Rousseau in love, with those of Robespierre in politics.

The well-worn volumes had passed through many a dirty hand, and polluted many an ignorant mind, but they had, in no instance, met with a more attentive reader, nor a more complete disciple, than

in the farmer's daughter, Sally ; from them she had become fully persuaded that love was necessary for her existence, and that love and *liberty* were inseparably united ; that the rich were wicked monopolists of property the poor ought to enjoy, and that it was the part of a great mind to wrest, from the guilty tyrants, their usurped dominion, and restore the golden reign of liberty, love, and equality.

Sally had often envied finery, and been always vain of her own beauty ; she had therefore no objection to the doctrine of equalizing the elegancies of dress, but what arose from the fear of another world ; and she reflected deeply on the possibility of reconciling the language of this very fine book with the precepts of parson Dawson, and the assurance given her in the little book she had kept to read on holidays, ever since she was a pupil at the Sunday schools, and which told her expressly, " the wicked shall go into hell, and all the people that forget God ;"  
and

and her understanding was too acute not to perceive it was necessary to forget God, ere she could coincide with the novel opinions of her new monitor.

Precisely at this period of her proselytism, the abigail of a vain and ignorant pretender, by retailing the bold assertions and impious arguments of her ridiculous and profane mistress, completed that mischief the licentious author of a loose seditious novel had begun ; and thus, in the very bosom of rustic retirement, in a situation of life where temptation rarely comes, and the more destructive passions can seldom be awakened, we behold a serpent hatched, of power to sting the bosom of virtue, though protected by wealth, rank, and reputation.

The report Mrs. Spencer's maid gave her lady of the pertinent replies and the novel learning of farmer Middleton's daughter, induced *her* to honour Sally with a considerable degree of notice ; she gave her an old gown, as strait as a pillow-case,

lent her several new books, whose latitude might compensate the deficiency; and finally pronounced her a girl of *genius*, who would one day prove the superiority of native talents over the trammels of superstition, and the usurpation of rank.

“From that varry time that our Zall came out to be a janus, I ha zeen, plain enuff, zhe ha bin gud for nout at all,” said farmer Middleton to his wife; but his wife was of a very different way of thinking; she foresaw a thousand undefined prospects of greatness, in which her daughter’s genius was to be the making of the family; and therefore indulged her in time for reading books “that was to make her larned,” and altering old clothes, so as to make one gown into two, which, she insisted upon, was very fine economy, “though to be zure it waz not over and above decent.”

As, however, there was no chance of ever growing a great woman in the country, and still less of meeting with any amorous

rous youth with whom her congenial soul could sympathize, and as there was little hope of ever her genius meeting with any other mode of visiting that metropolis where only her talents could expand, but through the medium of servitude, her amiable patroness, who began to be tired of the office, commenced an inquiry for a situation for her as a lady's maid, which ended with placing her in the household of lady Oxminster.

This lady was the wife of a young Irish nobleman, who had married her when the widow of a rich banking knight, because she had a large sum of ready money, which was necessary to him; and she had married *him* because he was a nobleman, and tolerably handsome, having found that her wealth had not procured her all the attention in society which she thought herself entitled to, though it had certainly filled her house with more company than she could receive with convenience, or even entertain with propriety.

Lady Oxminster was a showy woman, about forty, and nearly a dozen years older than her husband. At her toilet, Middleton soon became a perfect mistress of the *arcana* resorted to by ladies who prolong the claim of beauty by the assistance of art; and in the circle she met with in her servants' hall, she added a knowledge of that finesse, and the practice of that cunning, which she found more likely to push her fortunes in the world, than the splendid theories of democratic novelists, who had, it is true, made her a heroine, but not helped her to a theatre where she "could pluck bright honour from the moon;" she therefore resolved "to eke the lion's with the fox's skin;" and was beginning to be an admirable adept in the practice of insinuating artifices, and unfair practices, when the return of her lord, and, what was of more importance apparently, her lord's valet, from a visit to the nominal estates of the former in his own country,

try, arrested her attention, and employed all her thoughts.

Mr. O'Hara was not so book-learned as Mrs. Middleton, to be sure, but he was well read in fashionable life; his heart was as warm and as tinder as her own; and the congeniality of their souls was apparent to themselves and every body else; but lo! when from day to day their affection was ripening into the "most perfect termination of organized sensibility," it appeared that the poor Irishman had been completely duped by the superior art of the country waiting-maid; for the aspiring nymph had fascinated no less a personage than my lord himself, and returned every glance of his speaking eye with interest rather than prudence; for as her lady was under circumstances which are apt to generate the green-eyed monster, as his lordship's late absence had been prolonged beyond all decency, and as she had various other little reasons for doubting a fidelity, which had never been asserted by

G. 4

any



any one but himself, she cast a very sharp eye upon her maid, whose dress she had observed of late to be more shewy than usual; and so very pressing had been his lordship's solicitations, or so sweetly yielding had been the awakened susceptibility of Sally, that the suspicious wife, in a very few days, had an opportunity of breaking in upon a *tête-à-tête*, in which a third person was by no means an agreeable visitant.

Lady Oxminster was not remarkable, at any time, for the mildness of her temper, and, in the present instance, for some moments, it raged beyond controul; and there were few epithets of invective which she did not bestow on the culprits before her. During her reproaches, his lordship endeavoured to recover from the panic in which her unexpected appearance had, at first, involved him; and at the very first moment when want of breath in the lady obliged her to pause, he begged leave to observe, that although, to be sure, his conduct had not been quite correct, yet when-  
ever

ever the affair gained wind in the world, every body would say his lady's age was an excuse for him.

"My age, my lord ! what do you mean ?"

" I mean: that your ladyship will be forty-one come next Michaelmas, by your own parish register, which I procured some time ago ; but I never spoke before to throw your deceit in your face, nor to shame you among your friends, because I knew 'twas the thing, above all others, to break your heart ; so you've *that* to thank me for, after all your abuse."

" Cruel, cruel man !" said her ladyship, bursting into tears ; " how can you expose me before my servants ?"

" Don't cry, Bella ; I don't like to see women cry, at any rate ; you keep my secret, and I'll keep yours ; let this poor girl go without any more hubbub, and you may stick to three-and-thirty these fifty years."

His lordship offered his hand, which the lady accepted without reluctance ; and Sally,

trembling with anger, rather than shame, made her way out of the room, and, as soon as she was able, prepared for a speedy retreat from the house. His lordship was really grieved for the disgrace of a young woman, whom he could not help considering the victim of a violent passion for himself; and he prevailed, with some difficulty, on lady Oxminster to give a colour to her departure that might not injure her character materially, by imputing to carelessness in her situation, the passion which had occasioned her discharge. While her ladyship was thus employed, he contrived to fold a bank-note of fifty pounds in a slip of paper, and directing it to her, told the footman to give it her before she left the house. This man, knowing the passion Mr. O'Hara had professed for Middleton, took the note for *him* to present to his mistress; but that gentleman suspecting all was not right in the house, took the liberty of opening the *billet-doux*, which, in his opinion, well deserved the name.

name. Whether he conceived he had a right to apply the present as a plaister to his bleeding heart, or the pressure of his circumstances induced him to make a temporary appropriation of it, we cannot say, but it is certain that the person for whom it was designed never heard of it; and departed into the country little richer than she left it, experience excepted.

Scarcely had Middleton so modelled her story, as to wear some form of probability to her former patroness, whose sentiments had undergone a complete revolution in some respects since she had left the country, and with whose present conceptions it was found necessary to comply, when Miss Anne Holcroft called at Mrs. Spencer's, as commissioned by lady Elizabeth Osborne, to inquire for a maid for lady Langdale; and although these two ladies had so lately shewn all the inclination in the world to vilify and rival each other, yet they now cordially united in the laudable purpose of placing a person about lady Langdale, who

would, in all probability, be, in one way or other, a source of vexation to her. It was not difficult for them to see through the flimsy lie, which Middleton had adopted to veil the true cause of her sudden flight into the country ; and though they could not see to what an extent of mischief the powers of Middleton might be carried, yet they felt assured that her influence would be felt and lamented, in a family so regulated as lady Langdale's ; and they rejoiced exceedingly, in the opportunity which offered of learning the baronet's pursuits, through the winter, and the many mortifications to which, most probably, those pursuits would expose his lady.

On these worthy grounds, they resolved so to speak of Middleton, that lady Elizabeth would insure her a good reception at the Grove ; and the scheme succeeded to their entire satisfaction, as, from time to time, the grateful Middleton addressed to her honoured Mrs. Spencer, such letters as convinced them that the most excellent  
and

and elegant woman they had ever known, a woman who would have bestowed on *them* every good in her power, was very far from being happy.

To trace the steps by which Middleton attracted the attention, and awakened the passions of sir Edward, would be as useless as disgusting ; it is enough to say, that his vanity and credulity, long as he had known the world, and much as he had seen of the frail part of the sex, became the means of his enthrallment. He believed that Middleton was struck with his person, and struggled to conquer her feelings ; this led him to observe, and to pity her : he then spoke to her, and from day to day, she contrived means of conversation, which led to appointments, whose end she foresaw, from the time she had it in her power to involve him with his lady, for whom she had conceived a most perfect hatred ; and the slavery to which the proud and impetuous sir Edward Langdale was

was doomed, fully avenged the wrongs of his gentle and uncomplaining wife.

The high esteem, and the general regard which a man of sir Edward's good sense could not help feeling for his lady, the admiration she every where excited, and the tenderness she always displayed towards him, were all claims upon his fidelity, or at least upon the respect due to her *house*, which, as a man of honour, he could not endure to break; and the moment his transitory passion was satisfied, he bitterly repented the folly of his crime. Every succeeding day brought with it some extravagance that must be gratified, some ridiculous whim that must be indulged, or some ill-humour that must be soothed. He could not prevail on her to leave the house—except she was in the same place with him, her poor heart would be broken; the slightest opposition to her wishes produced, not only tears, fits, and upbraidings, but an immediate threat that she would

would fly to lady Langdale, and reveal the cruelty and perfidy of the man who had destroyed them both.

Sir Edward was extremely anxious for an heir, and for that, as well as the other reasons mentioned, this threat never failed to make him her obedient vassal, since he justly dreaded the effect such an eclairsissement would have on the health of Griselda; though there were many times when the vexation he experienced was such as to make him nearly throwing himself on her mercy, by confessing the whole affair, especially when he found that he was generally known to keep a mistress, from the foolish vanity of Middleton, who used to insist on his meeting her at the house of a convenient friend, from whence he drove her in his curricule, or escorted her to the Opera; and there were many times in which he had hoped Griselda, by expressing suspicion, would lead to a subject, whose mystery was a torture as severe as its elucidation must be terrible.

The



The perturbation of mind he experienced produced those fits of ill-humour which succeeded his indifference, and had contributed so much to afflict the heart of his patient wife : and it frequently happened, at the very time when his manners were most forbidding, his heart was wrung by anguish, and even bleeding with awakened tenderness. On the very day before they commenced their journey, he was on the eve of revealing his embarrassment, and trusting to the noble generosity of his wife for advice how to dispose of Middleton, for his heart revolted at the idea of taking her down to the Grove ; but he hesitated till the moment for discovery was past ; and he was again led to submit to her trammels, which were of late rendered more imposing by her pregnancy, which called for his tenderness, even while it kept him in continual agitation for its consequences, as discovery became inevitable. It was under these circumstances that she induced him to drive her down to the  
the

the Grove, and that he felt unequal to meet his wife on her arrival, and when at last he did see her, spoke only of his horse, though his mind, at that moment, was entirely occupied with a subject of very different interest; and his uneasiness, in fact, much greater than even the pain that he inflicted.

It had been uniformly the custom of Middleton, for some months, whenever she observed sir Edward pay any attention to his lady, to reproach him bitterly the first moment they were alone, and either induce him to leave the house, or work him into such a humour, that she was convinced his lady must suffer from it. Her power of inflicting this species of suffering had been the true reason why she had remained in the house with them, instead of accepting the splendid lodgings to which sir Edward would gladly have conducted her. She had a peculiar pleasure in mortifying and afflicting a woman of rank, for this was one of her original principles, when

when her genius for democratic philosophy first unfolded, and more especially when to her rank she added the "gloomy bigotry" of religion.

On the evening when sir Edward had been so charmed with the appearance of his wife among the villagers, that he had even forgot the painful theme which was now the perpetual subject of his ruminations, Middleton had been expecting his return for some time, and when she beheld him, the fury of a demon took possession of her breast, for he was actually handing his wife out of the carriage, with an air of the most lively affection. For some weeks past, she had suspected that he was growing more attached to his lady; and though she did not love him herself, yet this had awakened increased animosity in her malignant breast against that lady; for in many minds, the jealousy of pride is not less violent than the jealousy of love, and therefore the sight of this attention awakened every irascible sensation; and

and hardly had sir Edward time to enter the house, ere she sent the footman to tell him she must speak with him. The man, seeing his lady was poorly, did not enter immediately, but he was in time to prevent sir Edward from doing that which he was once more on the very point of—confessing his connexion, and beseeching her forgiveness.

The rage of Middleton, at what she termed his cruelty, knew no bounds; and it was with difficulty that sir Edward prevailed on her to moderate her voice, lest she should alarm the house. In her present humour, he durst not risk the discovery to Griselda, which he had meditated a minute before; and recollecting the pallid looks she wore on his leaving her, and the terrible effects which the outrageous conduct of Middleton would have upon her, should she rush into her presence at this moment, he hastily promised everything she required; and even bound himself, with an oath, to take her away in the morning,

morning, internally resolving that as soon as her *accouchement* should have placed her in safety, no power on earth should induce him to see her again, and deeply lamenting that so much time must yet pass, before he could fulfil this engagement with his own feelings.

A few moments of recollection showed sir Edward the utter impossibility of leaving the house with Middleton, without exposing his wife to all those horrors, from which, at so dreadful an expence, he had just essayed to save her. Vexed and harassed beyond endurance, he sought only to escape that eye which beamed on him with the fondest affection, and to hide the gloom of his thoughts, and the confusion of his countenance, in his own room.

When arrived there, he endeavoured to write, but sheet after sheet was torn, and he found it impossible to say any thing in the way of apology, which did not appear too little for his conscience, or too much for his pride. At length he threw  
himself

himself upon the bed, and sought that rest which he was little likely to obtain; in which situation he was found by Middleton, who perceiving him still in his clothes, and the implements of writing by his bedside, justly concluded how much this last triumph of her power would cost him, and exulted in the ravages she should make in the more delicate feelings of his devoted wife.

Sir Edward, though vexed with her intrusion, yet acceded to her desire of setting out immediately, and insisted that no servant in the house should be disturbed but the groom, and his own man who accompanied him; a vague hope crossed his mind, that as Griselda was entirely without suspicion, it would not strike her that Middleton had accompanied him, as it would be many hours before she would be missed; and though sensible that some of the servants knew of their connexion, yet he flattered himself the same love for their lady, which had hitherto kept them silent,

would

would continue to do it, till such time as he should be enabled to break the matter to her with safety.

Under this idea, he hastily collected his fragments of letters, which he burnt, and went himself to call the men who were necessary to him. While thus employed, Middleton had not been idle; she had taken his pen, with which she had scrawled a short, but insolent billet to Gilbert, in which she had mentioned her destination, and had placed it on the table in the house-keeper's room. When the horses were in the curricie, he ran, with an aching heart, and hurried step, into Griselda's room, and felt, from her endearments, a pang of self-reproach, so poignant, that he fled from them as from the lightning's stroke, and rushed to his carriage. His own man alone was there; the honest Tom was still in his stables, preparing to follow, and little dreaming who was the companion of his journey.

At the first stage, Middleton was saluted  
by

by the title of "my lady;" sir Edward, who had not spoken a single word during his ride, was roused by this appellation; and soon after inquired of his valet if the landlord had really mistaken Middleton for her lady, or was presuming to laugh at her?

"No, sir, the man did it very innocently; he had seen you before, and seeing, as he said, the lady was pretty, and great with child, he naturally concluded 'twas my lady Langdale."

"Middleton is not *great* with child."

"She looks, in a habit, quite as large as my *lady*, to my mind, sir."

"She is a less woman, and not near so good a figure."

"That *may* be the reason," said the man, retreating, as the subject of their discourse entered, but with a face expressive of so much doubt, that his master had a new subject for contemplation the rest of the day.

The title had tingled in the ears of Middleton so sweetly, that she could not bring herself



herself to relinquish it, and she accordingly announced herself lady Langdale during the rest of the journey, though sir Edward persisted in refusing his assent to it; and before he got to the end of it, became so thoroughly disgusted with her, that on his arrival at the Swan, in York, his first inquiry was after private lodgings, to which, in very plain terms, he told the lady she must remove.

Middleton, to her infinite mortification, found that her only strength had hitherto lain in her power to alarm that wife from whence she had torn him, and justly conceiving that her power was nearly at an end, she conceded with a good grace, only begging that he would show her a little of the town, and go with her to the milliner's, as she had nothing with her that was fit to be seen.

The city was now beginning to fill with strangers, many of whom were old acquaintances of sir Edward, and not a few had seen his lady; of course his *chere amie* obtained

obtained attention she by no means shrank from, however expressed. The baronet had too much native propriety to endure this species of notoriety ; he therefore determined to take a trip to Scarborough, to fill up the time till the races ; and leaving his valet to watch the motions of Middleton, lest she should write to lady Langdale, he set out, accompanied by a servant hired for the occasion.

At Scarborough he met very little company, but his person attracting attention, his name soon became known ; and on the second day after his arrival, an old gentleman, as he entered the library, said, laying down the newspaper in his hand—

“ I heartily wish you joy, sir Edward ; I perceive, by this paper, your lady presented you with an heir yesterday week, and, though a stranger, her character is well known to me ; and I rejoice to see you here, because it is an assurance that she is well.”

The surprise visible in the baronet's countenance, assured the speaker of his error in this conclusion; he presented the paper, but a mist hung on sir Edward's eyes—his face grew pale—he muttered an apology—and flung out of the room.

Sir Edward flew to the cliff for air, but his respiration continued difficult; he returned to his lodgings, but his heart continued to throb with violence; he procured the paper; he saw there the confirmation of his fears, since he could not doubt that his departure had precipitated the birth of his child, and probably placed its mother, its *unhappy* mother, in the most dangerous situation; but why was he not informed of this momentous event?

He could only assign one reason—the sense of his injustice, and even cruelty to his wife. This thought was indeed a dagger to his heart, for he felt, at this moment, that Griselda's contempt was capable of inflicting a pang he could not endure, because

cause it was merited; and that to lose her love, was to part with all most precious in existence. Her uncomplaining tenderness—the purity of her heart—the undeviating rectitude of her principles—her unobtrusive piety—and, above all, her warm unbroken affection, all rose to his mind, and told him “he had cast a pearl away,” at the very moment when his heart had taught him to estimate its value.

As he sat thus contemplating the ruin of his happiness, it struck him, that as he had left York without any precise information, as to the place he should go to, having mentioned Scarborough, or Burlington, or perhaps Redcar, to his servants, in a way that might lead them to doubt which had been his destination, it was possible that a messenger from the Grove might, ere this, have arrived at York. He rang the bell, ordered his horses instantly, and, in a few hours, was again at the Swan, which was now full of company; and

it was some time before he could get a sight of his own man, who, he was informed, generally drove her ladyship out in the curriole twice a-day.

"The devil, you mean ! send my groom to me."

Tom entered, looking extremely sulky, but drawing a letter from his waistcoat pocket, said—

"I guess this is what your honour wants ; a man brought it an hour or two arter you set out, an I would ha had hun follo'd you, but Mr. Jackson laff'd at I, and said your honour wazn't in no hurry to heer fra hoame."

"Mr. Jackson's a damn'd rascal !" said sir Edward, tearing open the letter, in which he read—

---

"HONOURED SIR,

"This serves to inform you, by order of my lady, that she has got a fine boy,

boy, who was born early in the morning of Thursday, the 15th.

I am, sir,

Your honour's humble servant,

ANNE GILBERT."

" Damnation ! here is not a word from Griselda !—where is the man who brought this letter ?"

" Mr. Jackson sent him back ; he was none of our folks, for none of they would come, as he said ; but I find he told madam Middleton that my lady—" here Tom's voice faltered—" my lady had been *main bad* at first, but that they thout her now clean out of danger."

" Then she has used me *cruelly, infamously,*" said the baronet, pacing the room in great agitation, " not to say a word, a single word to me."

" Zhe'd a-zaid a thousand, if zhe'd a-thout az how your honour cared to hear them," muttered Tom.

"Leave me, Tom; I am distracted."

As Tom opened the door to depart, two gentlemen in the passage caught a view of sir Edward, on which, with an halloo, they sprung in, and saluted him in the true jockey style, declared they were delighted to see him, and insisted on his immediately accompanying them to see the horses weighed.

Sir Edward, glad to get rid of himself, and, by any means, exchange the tumult of contending passions, went out with them, and was soon engaged in all the bustle of jockeyship, and surrounded by a swarm of broken lords, gentlemen black-legs, dashing fellows who are throwing away estates, and needy rascals who are seeking them. On his arriving at the ground, he complained to sir Sampson Forest, who was his conductor, that they had hurried him away unfairly, as he had taken no refreshment since his breakfast at Scarborough; but that gentleman undertook to supply his wants, and fulfilled his promise

mise by bringing him a pint tumbler of Madeira.

Sir Edward's horses were brought out and examined ; some fault was found with a favourite mare, which piqued him exceedingly, and he offered a considerable bet upon her, which was instantly accepted ; a stranger, who was near him, praised his spirit, and drank to his success in a bumper of brandy, at the same time offering him another ; sir Edward excused himself, saying he was excessively thirsty ; the gentleman procured him another tumbler of wine, which he hastily swallowed : and thus, heated with wine, irritated with the events of the morning, and stimulated by the example of those around him, he made enormous bets upon each of his horses, and did not retire till the greatest part of his fortune was involved in the ensuing contest.

From that sleep which intoxication had given and prolonged, sir Edward awoke at a late hour the following day, with an aching head and disordered frame, and bitterly



repented a folly to which he had always shewn a decided aversion. The events of the preceding evening passed slowly over his mind, without awakening his apprehension much ; but his anxiety to hear further from Griselda increased every moment ; his own indisposition taught him to feel for hers ; and he began to see that it was kind in her to inform him, at *all*, how she was situated, all circumstances considered. He recollected that her messenger had never seen *him*, but, it appeared, *had* seen Middleton, and probably returned with the information that she had usurped her name, and even said it was by his connivance. As these thoughts passed his mind, he sent for Tom, having given orders that Mr. Jackson should not be admitted to him, and thus interrogated him :

“ You are certain, Tom, that the man said your lady was doing well ? ”

“ Quite zertain ; because madam Middleton zaid az how zhe wished he was choaked for zaying zo.”

“ Umph !

"Umph!—I asked you what the *man* said."

"He zaid, all the country was up a-talking about your honour,"—sir Edward frowned—"and that your honour's beaby was baptized."

"What?" said the baronet, rising angrily.

"Edward George Osborne, arter your honour, and your honour's mother, who was as good a lady as ever brake bread."

This instance of Griselda's generous and delicate attention to his wishes affected sir Edward sensibly, and the tears sprang to his eyes; he sat down, and a long pause ensued; after which, with a deep sigh, he said—

"Tom, you love your lady?"

Tom brushed away the big drops that coursed down his rough cheeks, and gave a nod.

"I think, Tom, you shall go immediately to the Grove, and inquire if she is able to sit up, and to read a letter."

Tom blubbered aloud, endeavouring, in vain, to assure his master he would fly with it

“I can write by the post; but what I want you to do is, to see Gilbert, to learn exactly how lady Langdale is, to find who attends her, and, in short, to know if it would be advisable for me to return home immediately, or to stay away till she is recovered: lose not a moment, take post-horses, and return as soon as possible.”

Tom departed, but in about ten minutes returned with a long face, saying—

“I be feared your honour has forgot it be the first race-day to-morrow.”

“How should I forget it, you fool?—I thought you had been set off an hour ago.”

“There be zum gentlemen’s zarvants below, az do zay your honour have made many desperate bets, and when I did zee yo zo flushed like, wi’ all them there var-min about yo last night, I ratherly thout no good waz going on; but then, thinks I,  
his

his honour 'll remember his mare. Now, please your honour, if it be true that you really have anny money mich on this race, it'll never do for me to leave my horses; I'm zure it winnot, and it's my duty to tell ye zo, angry or not angry."

"I *have a great deal* of money on the mare, and more than I can lose on Miss Nancy and Jackall."

Tom groaned. "I munnot go, zir, indeed I *munnot*; my horses 'll never have fair play if I leaves 'em, an that 'ill be ruination to us all; we'd better put off a day; ye may have letters i'the morning, for I tould that man at cum, ye'd be zure to be back the first race-day."

To this advice sir Edward yielded a reluctant assent, fully aware of its necessity, and determined to prepare a letter, which might sooth the uneasiness, or deprecate the anger of his Griselda; but his aching head and palsied hand had scarcely made the first attempt, when he was broken in upon by Middleton, who, throwing herself

upon his knee, began to upbraid him for not informing her of his arrival the night before ; and to inquire, in a very peremptory tone, what was the reason that he had refused Jackson's attendance ?

" I am offended with Jackson, and shall dismiss him," replied sir Edward, haughtily.

" And pray, sir, for what ?" said Middleton, with a look in which effrontery contended with terror.

" I do not conceive myself bound to give my reasons for dismissing my servants," said the baronet ; " but my present one is self-evident : he prevented the man from following me, who ought to have searched the kingdom through till he had found me."

" Lord bless us ! here's a fuss about nothing !" said the wretch, recovering herself.

" *Nothing !*" said the baronet, his eyes flashing fire, and rising forcibly from the burthen she had imposed upon him.

" Cruel, cruel man ! how can you use  
me

me thus !" cried Middleton, sobbing, " I who have sacrificed all to my passion for you ? "

Sir Edward looked softened, and the fair deceiver performed an hysteric fit most admirably, which ended with an agreement, that he should drive her to her lodgings, which were on the skirts of the city, and the following day should escort her to the race-course.

The former part of this agreement was instantly fulfilled, but from the open scandal, and degradation of the latter, sir Edward was fortunately saved ; for as no blandishments, on the part of Middleton, could induce him to remain with her, as soon as he had led her to her own room, he returned to his carriage ; at the bottom of the stairs he was stopped by the master of the house, a respectable elderly-looking Frenchman, who begged " milord for von littel moment to step into his parlour. "

Sir Edward complied in silence, and having taken the offered chair, with an  
air

air of attention to the wishes of his host, the latter addressed him thus—

“Milord, I am extremement chagrin dat I am forced to tell you dat your lady must not live some more in my house; pardonnez moi, mais c'est vrai dat she is von atelist, and von despiser of tout le bon Chretien; she corrupt my daughter, she insulté ma wife, she say dere is no sin in de adultery; mon Dieu! she is von woman with whom you *must not* leave your own servante, milord. I am greeve, ver much greeve, to tele dis ting; but I am honnête homme; your cōuntry have saving me, et la mienne, and I no seeing von Inglis milord abusoit. It was conduct like dis, it was de wickedness of de great, et l'ambition de vulgaire, ruin mine own pauvre country; it was dat dit murder her king, and make her noblesse des vagabonds.”

There was an air of feeling and rectitude in the old man's address, which forced its way to the understanding, as well as the sensibility, of sir Edward; he thanked him

for

for his attention, but said it was impossible to provide any other rooms for the lady during the race-week ; but promised she should leave the place in a very few days ; and desired that he would particularly notice the conduct of Jackson, to whom he alluded.

The old man explained : he said he had not perceived any thing in the conduct of the parties, that should authorize suspicion as to its propriety, further than that the man treated her as " if she were a fellow-servant, and not a lady, which had occasioned le grand suspicions, et tout ensemble leur maniers were not comme il faut ; and de lady being sans religion, must be always in the way a la perdition, by her own creed."

This opinion sir Edward had no inclination to controvert ; and he parted with a renewed resolution to see Middleton no more, after the period of her convalescence, again regretting the length of the time. The violence of her temper, the full persuasion



sion that she loved him, and the consciousness of having ruined, though not seduced her, all operated so far on his humanity, that he could not resolve to break with her, at a period when her own life, and that of an innocent little being, might be risked by his adopting such a system of conduct ; and he shuddered at the idea of her death, under such a frame of mind, as the most dreadful evil that could befall him.

The day following he sent an excuse for not attending her to the ground, which she was graciously pleased to accept, having met with an old acquaintance whose society she greatly preferred. This was a day of great anxiety to sir Edward ; the post brought no letters ; but the concerns of the husband and father were superseded by those of the anxious gamester, who already repented the temerity, and abhorred the folly of his conduct. The general opinion of the day was so decidedly against him, that no one had the impertinence to offer

offer him another wager ; and he appeared scarcely to hope for success, so conscious was he of the odds being against him. Tom, though ever a bird of ill omen on these occasions, ventured to speak pretty favourably ; and partly from his hopes being thus supported, and partly from that pride with which man resists oppression, even when he feels that it is merited, the baronet appeared on the turf in high spirits, and was pronounced, by the ladies, a charming naughty creature, a dear devil, an enchanting wretch, and every thing else with which folly chuses to designate beauty in league with vice.

But there were some ladies, and some gentlemen too, who held aloof from the man they felt to be contemptible, and who, even in this gay assembly, gave a sigh to the sorrows of the distant wife ; and this number, though few, were all whose smile or frown sir Edward held worthy his attention. He felt the rebuke of a cold look from a worthy man, and a repulsive

sive frown from a virtuous woman ; and at the very moment when he was contriving how to escape the circle where he was exposed to, he found himself suddenly transfixed to the spot, by seeing his own curricule, in which sat Middleton, dressed in the height of the mode, driven by a handsome fellow, who had the look of a servant out of livery, but whom he had never seen before.

“ That’s a pair of very pretty ponies your *bona roba* sports,” said sir Sampson Forest to sir Edward ; but sir Edward heard him not ; cursing his own folly in not bringing the curricule himself to the ground, in not commanding Middleton to stay at home, he rushed on to the course, and sought to hide himself among the jockies. He thought on Griselda’s words, when she said, “ My Edward is designed for better things than vice and dissipation,” and he found that at least he could not be happy under them, Absorbed in his own thoughts, he forgot even the important sum he had  
at

at stake, and saw, without emotion, the horses start for the last time; and many were astonished at the calmness of his features, who little suspected the confusion of his mind; and he was saluted *winner*, and congratulated by many, before he had awakened from the distressing reverie into which this vexatious incident had plunged him.

Tom elbowed his way through the crowd to his master, whom he drew aside, saying he would now set off as soon as he pleased, if nobody else could be found to go; but his mind misgave him plaguily yet, and he hardly knew whether the mare should be left, seeing nobody could understand her so well as himself; “and, like all other *she-things*, her constitution was very ticklish, and she had as many maggots as a dancing-master.”

Sir Edward, flushed with conquest in a contest where he had not expected it, would not, at this moment, bear to have his hopes damped, or his pleasure disputed;  
the

the horses were consigned to his new man, and Tom immediately set out to inquire after his lady.

---

---

## CHAP. V.

TOM arrived at the Grove in the middle of the night, at the time when Griselda was in the most imminent danger. Fearful of disturbing the family, and not aware that so many were watching, he went to bed at his sister's, and from this circumstance obtained a few hours rest, which he would not otherways have allowed himself. From his friends at the mill, he learnt the extreme danger in which lady Langdale was then considered, and that lady Elizabeth Osborne, and general Harcourt, were arrived the night before; but he hastened to the  
Grove,

Grove, that he might know from Gilbert herself, the exact state in which she conceived his lady to be.

Several hours elapsed before he was able to see Gilbert, and when he did, he found only a confirmation of all his fears. From her he heard the particulars we have already recounted, together with innumerable reproaches for his master, and bitter invectives against Middleton in abundance, in which Tom heartily concurred. During the short time he remained with Gilbert, he saw general Harcourt through the window, and on observing he was a handsome stately old gentleman, Gilbert told him, that she was quite sure, if her lady's fever should take a turn, and she should get better, he would take her away with him ; and proceeded to say, that there was no possibility, in reason or decency, for so good a woman as her lady ever to live again with such a profligate as sir Edward.

Tom rose suddenly, said it was a wicked thing,

thing, in his mind, to part man and wife ; and that if his poor lady got better, he would advise her to stick to sir Edward, let all the ladies and generals in the country say what they would ; “ For how,” said Tom, seizing Gilbert’s arm, “ how should a zoldier, that lives by war, know how to make peace, especially atween man and wife, who are mostly as skittish as unbroken fillies ?—and what does an old maid know about matrimony, and them kind of things, who never learnt to bite the bridle in her life ? They are very poor advizers, take my word for it, Mrs. Gilbert.”

Tom left the Grove immediately, but not till he had gained a promise from Mrs. Nicholson that she would write by every post. He pursued his way with the utmost alacrity ; but as it was nearly two hundred miles from York to that part of Gloucestershire where the Grove lay, the fifth day was entered upon since his departure. He found his master, who had been up all night,

night, just gone to bed ; lothe to disturb him only to hear bad news, his next question was the success of the races ; he was answered that his master had been winner the second day, but that the mare had been beat hollow.

Tom shook his head and groaned deeply.

" Aye, you may well groan," said his informer, " for your master's in for it finely ; he doubled his bets on the mare, after his second winning, and so she not only lost him all he had won, but soused his estates into the bargain ; indeed, I am told he is a ruined man."

" They who told you lied !" said Tom, clenching his fist.

" You don't need to be angry," said the man ; " only this I know, that when he was pressed to bet on a match last night, he declined it, saying he was involved quite as far as he could answer."

" Hurra !" cried Tom ; " he's an honest man after all, and, if my lady lives, he'll be somebody yet."

Sir



Sir Edward's bell rung, for he could not sleep, and wished to take coffee; he was therefore informed of Tom's arrival, and ordered him to his bedside immediately.

The exultation of the moment had subsided, and Tom entered his master's chamber, with a face as woe-begone as him "who drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night," and half his tale was told before he had uttered a syllable.

"I fear, Tom, you have left your lady very ill," said sir Edward, in a tone of deep despondency.

"We zhall ha a letter fra Mrs. Nicholson to-morrow, zur, and we'll hoape zhe'll be better."

"What is the matter with her, Tom?"

"Zhe ha got one o' them fevers at makes foalks crazy, zur, that's all; they zay az zhe do very zeldom zpeak, but when she does begin, zhe do talk zoa, it breaks every body's heart to hear her. There be auld doctor Harrington there all along, and there be general Harcourt, and lady

lady Elizabeth, but zhe do know none o' them ; her poor head rung a-nothing but you and her baby."

Sir Edward turned his face to the pillow, and sighed from his very heart.

Tom was grieved for his master, and thinking to comfort him, added—

" Gilbert just gid me a gliff at his little honour, and to be zure, Lord love it ! 'tis a perfect moral of you ; it have got that little dint in its chin, and a forehead for the world like your honour's."

Sir Edward was still silent, and Tom, anxious to relieve him, went on:

" To be zure, it's quite zurprizing ~~one~~ should have zitch a love for them *little* things: there's my zizter's child, why the feather's ready to work night and day, now he thinks he's got a lad to work for; and *I* myzel, if ought was to 'ail *him*, I should lay by every zhilling I could get for it, poor helpless thing !"

Sir Edward suddenly turned his face, and exhibited a countenance in which anguish

and despair were so forcibly depicted, that Tom, horror-struck, started back, but in a moment recovered himself, and in a tone of the deepest sympathy, said—

“Do not fret, sir Edward—pray ye do not!—I’ll never believe all the generals in the word, nor all the country round, if they abuse her ever so, will make my lady forsake you—*noa, noa*—I be zure zhe’ll bide wi you, till zhe be called to bide in heaven, if so be az you don’t ax her to live wi Middleton, for that was the last word zhe said, Gilbert tould me, while zhe was in her senses; and now zhe does nout but call for ye, and ax ye to come and zee your boy—oh, foul befall the tongues that slander her!”

“Who dares to slander her?” said sir Edward, springing from his bed.

“All the country round do zay az zhe knew you did keep Middleton, and they az good az zay zhe wouldn’t ha zubmitted to it, if there hadn’t been faults o’ both sides.”

“All

"All the country round may go to hell!" said the baronet, dressing in a great passion, while Tom withdrew, not sorry to see the agony under which he laboured exchanged for an emotion less acute. In the course of a few minutes he was recalled, and received his orders respecting the horses, and was likewise told of the particulars of the losing race-day, of which he had already been too well informed. He had the satisfaction of learning that the baronet had not visited Middleton during his absence, and that he was now endeavouring to procure lodgings in the neighbourhood, where he might leave her comfortably fixed for a few months.

As soon as sir Edward came down stairs, he was surrounded by many, to whom he stood indebted, who were going to leave the place, and with whom it was necessary to make some kind of settlement. In this distressing employment the hours passed till evening, when most of the gentlemen who had associated on the turf dined together,

gether, and several of their friends accompanied them ; amongst the rest, lord Oxminster was announced. Sir Edward had taken a dislike to this nobleman, from the way in which he had heard Middleton account for her departure from his house, in which she had thought proper to impute the vilest conduct to his lordship, and cry up her own as a miracle of virtue. His temper, irritated by his losses, and his feelings agitated by the situation of a woman for whom he felt every hour increasing interest, rendered him inclined to see every thing through a jaundiced medium ; and though the rest of the party thought lord Oxminster a lively, pleasant companion, whose thoughtless good-humour intitled him to their civility, he was determined to repel every advance towards intimacy which that nobleman seemed inclined to make.

In the course of the evening billiards were proposed ; and on one of the gentlemen observing that he thought sir Edward  
the

the best player now in York, lord Oxminster said that he had been complimented on *his* skill, in much the same terms, in his own country, and he should like to try it with him.

The baronet declined playing, somewhat proudly.

"How damned cross you are to-night, sir Ned!" said lord Hugh Campbell; "I declare I never saw such a queer fellow; you look glum when you win, and glum when you lose; when the devil is it that you are the charming fellow the women call you?"

"Sir Edward has a right to be *cross*," said lord Oxminster, somewhat sneeringly, "for his lady has good humour enough for *two*, that's certain."

"What do you mean, my lord?" said the baronet hastily; "my lady's name is not to be trifled with."

"To be sure *not*—you're mighty tender of her honour and her feelings, I'll be bound; but I'll answer your question with

another—do you know any thing of the private history of Sally Middleton?—hey?”

Surprised at what he considered the *ne plus ultra* of Irish confidence, sir Edward answered—“ Yes, I *do* know something of her history, and of the part which lord Oxminster bore in it, and that will probably account to him for the little ambition I have displayed for the honour of his acquaintance.”

“ And by the same rule,” replied his lordship, “ it will account for my saying your lady was a good-natured wife. Ah, by my soul, and a *very* good-natured one she was too, or she wouldn’t a-kept such a wh—— as that under her roof, for her husband’s convenience, d’ye see, half a year together.”

“ You are a liar!—a damn’d infernal liar!” roared the baronet, in a voice of thunder; “ after seeking, in vain, to seduce an innocent girl, you would now injure the pure fame of a virtuous woman.”

“ Ah,

“ Ah, well, you need say no more—you are not the man I took ye for; but, of course, we shall hear a little further of each other.”

“ Of course,” said sir Edward, stalking through the company, who had all rose in alarm, and many of whom endeavoured, but in vain, to oppose his retreat, in the hopes that some explanation would be made, which might induce apology on the part of sir Edward.

When the baronet had reached his own room, he felt as if he had reached the climax of misery; the events of this day, and the preceding, had involved him in such a complication of horrors, as almost exceeded endurance, and mocked belief. He strove to arrange his ideas—poverty, sickness, and death, and, what was worse than all, *infamy*, were his own dreadful boon to himself; and to his house, to those he had solemnly pledged himself to protect, to those whom he now felt dear to him as the life he had presumed to venture on a quar-



rel with a man he despised. In this state of exasperated misery, he was waited upon by captain Thornton, with the challenge he expected from lord Oxminster, who was accompanied by lord Hugh Campbell, to offer any assistance, in compromising the affair, in *his* power, conceiving himself accessory in producing the rupture. Sir Edward would not allow his interference in any other way than the usual duties of a second; and captain Thornton then proceeded to say, that as sir Edward was not only a husband but a father, and might therefore have many points of importance to settle, he was willing to defer their meeting to the morning but one following, if more agreeable.

Sir Edward replied, that he had certainly a great desire to wait the arrival of the post the next morning, and therefore acceded to the proposal gladly: the gentlemen then took their leave.

"A husband and a father," said sir Edward to himself, as he slowly paced the room,

room, " and *once* a Christian, going to rush uncalled into the presence of my God, and tell how I have fulfilled their respective duties ; but away with this !—away—away—away !"

He rang the bell violently, and ordered wine, which he swallowed rapidly ; but it increased the fever that burnt in his veins, without soothing, or even stupifying the sense of his unutterable misery. Towards daybreak he again threw himself on the bed ; and Tom found him in the morning still more haggard, and with a face of more confirmed anguish than on the preceding day.

The honest lad brought a letter, which he hoped might be the medium of comfort. Sir Edward opened his dim eyes, and hastily seizing it, read aloud—

---

" HONOURED SIR,

" Soon after Thomas set off, we perceived a considerable change, for the

better, in my lady ; and towards evening she became sensible, and got a very comfortable sleep ; the doctor says she will do now, if she has no more shocks, for he finds her pulse this morning better than he expected ; and that every thing now is to be done by good nursing, and that cannot be neglected here, for both the ladies are with her night and day, and are ready to lay down their lives for her ; but if I may be so bold as to speak my mind, I think your honour's company would set her up sooner than any thing in the world, if you would take care to leave you know who behind you. I am your honour's very well-wisher, and, in duty bound,

Your humble servant,

H. NICHOLSON."

---

" There, your honour !" said Tom, exultingly ; " let us once get home again and all will be well."

" I shall never, *never* get home again !" said

said sir Edward, in a tone so desponding, that Tom fancied he was extremely ill, and was further confirmed in his opinion, when the baronet desired him to procure an attorney to come to him immediately.

"Heaven preserve your honour!—you mean a doctor; your honour is taken the same way with my poor lady."

Sir Edward gave a languid smile at the honest lad's mistake, and told him to fetch the landlord, by whose assistance he soon procured an intelligent professor of the law.

Lord Oxminster had obliged several of his friends, though without knowing their true motives, when it was suggested that sir Edward would require some time to settle his affairs. This was a day of extreme hurry; bond after bond was prepared; and till midnight sir Edward was engaged in all the bustle of business, and the confusion of jarring claimants. On this eventful day, he learnt how to estimate the friendship of fashionable rakes, and dissipated misers;

he saw that *self* was alike the moving principle of him who squandered with profusion, and him who hoarded with avarice; he saw too that he had far overrated his own powers of answering jockey claims, and involved his estates beyond all reparation; nevertheless he judged it right to make a will, to enable his widow to settle his affairs in her own way, the more especially as she had no settlement, and his creditors might otherwise oblige her to sell those estates of hers he had considered sacred, but which he now felt, with inexpressible woe, might be legally infringed.

At length the gentle tap at his door ceased to be repeated, and the prostituted words, of "I am really sorry to trouble you, my good friend, but I am so cursedly out of cash," no longer hissed in his weary ear; the attorney had finished his business, and poor Tom alone waited for admittance.

"Here is a note, Tom, which you must take

take to the Grove yourself, in case I—I—  
in case I——”

“My dear, *dear* master,” said Tom, gazing on his pale face, and bursting into tears, “tell me, for God’s sake, where you are going to, and what you are going for? I be zure and zertain you be in no *condi-tion* to go.”

Sir Edward struck his forehead violently, and turned, in agony, from the fearful gaze of his trembling interrogator.

“Aye, there it is,” said Tom, internally, “all the mischief is in his poor head, zure enuff.”

But when he again beheld his countenance, Tom saw there was anguish at the heart also, and his own bled at the contemplation; rendered bold from distress, he threw himself on his knees before his master, and seizing his hand, earnestly besought him not to do any *wicked* thing, but to remember what “my lady tould ~~ould~~ Robert on his deathbed —” there was  
mercy

mercy in heaven over every sinner that repented."

As the poor fellow spoke, his voice was suffocated with emotion; he relinquished the hand he had took, and covering his face with his own, he laid his head at his master's feet, and wept in agony.

After a long pause—"I have been settling money matters the whole day," said sir Edward, "but I have not remembered you, Tom; but your lady——"

"This is no time to talk of money," said Tom, recovering himself.

"But you must leave me soon, Tom, and I must speak of the things on my mind. You are the only person on whose good-will I have any reliance."

Tom rose, and bowed to the command he impatiently expected.

"I hope, Tom, you do not think, because you see me distressed, and know that I have lost a great deal of money, I hope you do not think me so wicked as to meditate self-murder?"

"I hope

"I hope *not*, your honour ; God in Heaven forbid ! But when major Hirst lost all his money at pharo, your honour knows he zhot himself, and, zaving your honour's presence, but he just looked like you, az he ran through lady Burningham's passage—I zhall niver forget it az long az I live."

"I have an affair of honour in hand, Tom."

"Of *honour* !" said Tom ; " nay, then it's no uze to talk at all, I knows, because it's what every gentleman goes through with, right or wrong, though to my mind, it's a good deal like t'other : to be zure, a man has a chance to live and repent, that's all."

"You would not, Tom, have me suffer your lady to be reflected on, because my own conduct has been——"

"My lady flected on !" cried Tom, catching fire ; " noa, by the dickens, it was only az I comed back fra the Grove t'other day, I knocked a post-boy's two front teeth clean down his throat, for zaying  
ing



ing he guess'd you and zhe were properly matched."

"I wish the usages of society, Tom, would permit me to take as innocent a revenge, but as that is not the case, I must request you to set off, the moment the affair is over, to the Grove; and whatever turn it takes, guard your lady from all knowledge of the circumstances, till she has gained strength to bear it: mind my words—let Gilbert *alone* attend her—let no one be put into mourning—in short, no circumstance transpire till she has perfectly recovered her health, and then, *not till then*, give her this note with your own hands. Now leave me, my good fellow, your grief will unfit me for the task before me;—go, Tom—you would not make a coward of your master?"

Tom hastily withdrew; sir Edward locked the door, and once more endeavoured to compose himself. If that pause before the hour of battle, so exquisitely described by Miss Holford, be awful to the hero, surely

surely it is far more so to the duellist ; for the patriot's fire warms not his breast, nor the thirst for glory flames in his veins ; however great his personal courage, however acute his sense of injury, in the hour of recollection, he recoils from his projected vengeance, and shudders at the gulf before him.

Sir Edward sat down by his bedside, and harrassed as he was, hoped that languor would subdue the acuteness of his feelings, and stupor supply what sleep denied ; but this hope was vain—never had the powers of his comprehensive mind been more vigorous in their exertions, more acute in their sensibilities ; past, present, and future, were all before him ; he saw, at once, all that he might have been, and all he had become. He saw that the very mercy of Heaven had been held out to him in vain, for he had fled from the angel who would have restored him to Paradise.

Every look, word, and action of Griselda were before him, and especially on the  
the

the last evening he spent with her ; for a moment he rejoiced that he had been captivated by her loveliness, and expressed his esteem of her virtues ; but then the shameful conclusion of that day struck on his mind, and the memory of Middleton, and what she too might suffer, followed it. The sorrows of guilt have a pang known only to the guilty ; this was too much ; he traversed the room with steps that marked the perturbation of his mind, and the indescribable bitterness of the emotions which possessed him.

At the dawn of day lord Hugh opened his chamber-door, according to appointment ; for, fearing interruption, both parties had agreed, the preceding evening, to this early hour. The place appointed, for the same reason, was nearly a mile from the city, where they quickly arrived in lord Hugh's chariot. They waited a very short time for lord Oxminster, whose face bore a very different character from that of his opponent, being astonishingly indifferent to

to the scene before him, and rubbing his eyes, as if but half awake from the sleep of intoxication. Soon after his arrival, sir Edward saw Tom come forward; the moment he came within view he stopped, and laid his face against a tree, as if seeking support for the horrors that awaited him.

It was agreed that the gentlemen should fire together—they did so; sir Edward received the ball of his antagonist in his right shoulder, and immediately fell, bleeding profusely.

The seconds regretted exceedingly their strange oversight in not procuring a surgeon; and lord Oxminster, now thoroughly awake, endeavoured to staunch the blood with his handkerchief, while Tom, seizing a horse from his lordship's man, galloped off for assistance. In a short time sir Edward was conveyed to a neighbouring farmhouse, and laid on the bed in the dame's parlour. The surgeon, on his arrival, said the extraction of the ball would be attended with great pain, and probably danger,

ger, owing to the effusion of blood ; but there were no symptoms that, at present, induced him to fear much.

“ ’Tis a very ugly affair altogether,” said his lordship, “ and I shan’t choose, d’ye see, to go out of the way at all ; so if you’ll allow me to stay and nurse ye, ’twill be all very well. When I first spoke, I did it by way of opening your eyes, and not your veins, d’ye see, about the girl ; for I thought she’d taken you in, for she was so very fond of me, that I could not help—”

“ Fond of *you* !” said sir Edward, turning his languid eyes towards lord Oxminster.

“ On the honour of a gentleman, that she *was* ; for if she had not thrown herself in my way, and talked sentiment, and all that, I should never have looked at her at all, you see ; for though my lady’s a little matter too old for me, she’s a fine woman yet, and I owe her respect any how, and her house should have been inviolate. As to *your* lady, while all the world talks of her beauty,

beauty, and her goodness, and all that, I should have been the last man in the world to have had a fling at *her*, but you made me mad."

The surgeon interfered to insist on there being no more talking; and as his assistant was now arrived, he proceeded to extract the ball, a task of much difficulty, and great pain. In about an hour after this operation, Tom set out on his mission to the Grove, having agreed with the farmer's son that he should write to him every morning an account of his master's health, and with the farmer's wife that she should nurse him, as if he were her own son.

Tom's heart was very melancholy as he retraced his steps to the Grove, and pondered on the means of keeping a secret, which, in a few days, would be spread over the kingdom. Happily the strong interest still excited by lady Langdale's situation prevented the general from inquiring after the newspapers, and Tom contrived to seize all those which came to the house, in  
which

which the affair was mentioned, at the time he received his own letters from the farmer's son. These letters were by no means favourable to his hopes of concealment till the baronet's convalescence, as he found that a considerable degree of fever had succeeded the extraction of the ball, that two physicians had been called in, which the farmer thought a very bad sign, and that it was the opinion of all the family, that if the gentleman had any body that belonged to him, they ought to come and see after him.

For more than a week this continued, with little variety in the theme of these Yorkshire epistles, and Tom, in great distress, revealed his sorrows to Gilbert and Nicholson; the former, blaming herself for having spoken too much already, resolved to say no more, be the consequence what it might; but the latter, who had lived with sir Edward from his childhood, who loved him so well as soon to forgive errors which she thought his sufferings had

had expiated, grew impatient to attend him, which Tom encouraged; and the very day on which the company left the Grove, she got Tom to take her on horseback to meet the Birmingham coach, albeit not of a travelling make, and left Gilbert to account for her absence as well as she was able.

The day following the babe appeared better, and Griselda, thinking she should gain strength by going into the air, took a short ride; on her return, she was surprised by seeing Tom turn quickly out of the way of the carriage. Surprise gave way to pleasure, and she instantly spoke to the footman to bring Tom to her, the moment she alighted; the man obeyed, and Tom, with an unwilling step, was ushered into her dressing-room.

“Have you not got a letter for me, Tom?”

Tom’s hand went mechanically to his waistcoat-pocket as he answered—“Yes, my



my lady ;" but instantly recollecting the circumstances under which alone it was to be given, he checked himself, saying—" *noa*, my lady, I ha gotten no letter, only a message."

"What message?" said the agitated wife; "what does your master say, Tom?"

"He do zay," said Tom, hesitating for words which it was not easy to invent, where nature had denied fluency, and habit abhorred falsehood, "he do zay that he do hate that d——d b——h with all his zoul, and he do love your ladyship to the life o'un; and if you can get over what's past, you zhall zee what you zhall zee," said Tom, with a very knowing nod.

"Do not deceive me, Tom, even with the *best* intention; your master could not send this message to me."

"I don't zay that he uzed those very words, but I'll zwear to the meaning on 'em."

"But why did he not write?"

"It's

"It's foine writing when a man's got a gunshot wound in his right arm, my lady."

"A wound!—good God, is sir Edward wounded?—how—where?—tell me, Tom, this instant; where, where can I find him?—Let the horses be put to this instant—oh Heavens, who wounded him?"

"God bless your ladyship's honour, don't go near him—he's getting better—he'll be well soon; he'll nivver forgive I the longest day he lives, for he sent I here a-purpoze to watch at nobody zaid a word to yo; and zo I have, as Gilbert knows, watched every one on 'em, as a cat watches a mouse; and took away ould mother Nicholson, az snug az a button, jizt to nürze his honour; but just by ill-luck, az 'twere, I ha let it out myzelf."

"Well, never mind, Tom, get me the horses this instant, and drive me to your master—I insist upon it!—fly!"

Gilbert coming in, and finding the turn things had taken, informed her agitated

mistress as much of the affair as Tom's mutilated accounts had enabled her to learn; but it was enough for the faithful wife to know that her husband was suffering. In vain Gilbert urged the length of the journey, her own remaining weakness, the excellence of Nicholson's nursing, and the probability of the baronet's convalescence; she insisted on going immediately, and only besought her to give a change of linen to Anne, and hasten Tom with the carriage.

"Nay," said Gilbert, "if you must go, my lady, I'll go with you to the world's end; how dare I trust you, ill as you are, and shaking in every limb, to be nursed by so young a woman as Anne?"

"My dear Gilbert, hear me—I confide my child, my invaluable treasure, to your care, and yours alone; would you forsake my darling?"

The unconscious child felt not its mother's kiss, nor the tears which accompanied it, for its sleep was sound. Gilbert replaced

replaced it in the cradle, and breathed an ardent prayer for the safety of its mother, whose extreme anxiety allowed her no repose till it became so absolutely necessary, that she was conscious if she did not take it, she should become utterly unable to proceed, and, instead of bringing peace and comfort to her afflicted husband, become a means of increasing his uneasiness. As she drew near the place of her destination, her agitation increased to the most distressing degree, and her attendant sought, but in vain, to divert her from visiting sir Edward that evening. "God will sustain me through *this* also," said she, internally, and a short composure followed: but when Tom pointed out the house where his master lay, her very soul seemed to flutter on her lip, as if it were about to fly for ever.

Tom rode forward to the house before them, and galloped back to say sir Edward had appeared better, ever since Mrs. Nicholson's arrival; this was a cordial to his trembling lady. Fearful of disturb-

ing sir Edward by the sound of the carriage, she proposed alighting at a little distance; but it was not without difficulty that her convulsed frame could be supported into the farmer's kitchen, where the family gazed on her as the inhabitant of another world, whose fragile beauty was unfit to bear the rude encounters it must sustain in this, and pity mingled with their admiration.

Griselda heard, with much satisfaction, that sir Edward had been sleeping an hour upon the sofa, as she hoped it would give him strength to bear the surprise of her arrival, which Tom begged he might announce, being, as he said, the person, of all others, to do it properly, though he confessed great fears of his master's anger. Though lady Langdale did not think Tom, of *all others*, the most likely to manage this delicate office with address, yet she had had so many proofs of the goodness of his heart, and his sincere attachment to his master, that she could not bring herself to  
refuse;

refuse ; as soon, therefore, as the baronet was awake, the farmer's wife announced Tom's arrival, who was immediately received by sir Edward with marks of great solicitude on his pallid face.

" Well, Tom, what brings you here ?—nothing bad surely ?"

" Noa, zur, nothing bad, zure enuff."

" How is your lady ?—the want of your letters has been a great loss to me these two days."

" Now that's quite zurprising, your honour, for I be az poor a hand at scribing az moast ; but az to my lady, zur, zhe be a little fainty, or zo, an she would ha bin killed outright, if I hadn't got her to sleep at Chesterfield."

" Good God ! is Griselda at *Chesterfield* ? is my wife on the road to—Oh Heaven !"

" Noa, zur, noa, she be not on the road to heaven at all ; zhe be here in the kitchen."

Sir Edward rose, sat down again, fixing his eyes wildy on the door, which Nichol-

son opened; she crossed a short passage, and every step she gave waked a throb in the bosom of the invalid:—she returned, and another step was heard that shook his weakened frame as if to dissolution.—Yes! — it is Griselda! — how pale she looks! —but she looks like the angel of mercy. Unable to support herself, she sinks on her knees before her husband—her head falls upon his lap, but her arms embrace him—she is unable to speak, but her look, her action, her very sigh, is the language of pity, of pardon, of love unutterable!

“Poor Griselda!” said the baronet, as he leant over her, and his warm tears dropt on her cheek; he brushed them away, and feebly said—“Rise, my love, I beseech you rise—I cannot assist you; I ought to be kneeling at *your* feet, Griselda; I have not deserved this tenderness.”

“Hush!” said Griselda, rising, and laying her hand upon his lips; “I will not hear another word! I am come to manage,  
not

not indulge you, and I shall only allow you to say what I please; let us amuse ourselves only with looking forward to the hour when your recovery shall enable us to return to our dear home, and our lovely little boy: let us think of *that*, and *that alone*, my love."

Sir Edward smiled in token of compliance, but his heart was too full to admit reply; and it was happy for both that the arrival of the surgeon obliged them to restrain emotions, the indulgence of which was too much for their harrassed and weakened frames to endure.

Under the tender assiduities of his new nurse, sir Edward appeared, for a few days, to recover his strength, and renovate his spirits; but he had been reduced so extremely low, though never in any immediate danger, that it was the opinion of the medical men it would be many months before his usual health could be restored, and there were symptoms which frequently threatened decline; but so well satisfied



were sir Edward and lady Langdale with the skill and attention of those gentlemen of the faculty they employed from York, that they did not wish to remove until sir Edward's convalescence rendered their attentions unnecessary, except to more convenient lodgings, which were soon procured, and to which sir Edward bore his little journey better than could have been expected, though he still experienced considerable pain from his wound. It was with great mortification he perceived that his new lodgings were extremely near those he had taken for Middleton, of whom he had never heard since the day before the duel, when he had enclosed her a bill, and promised her a provision for her child, in case of his death. His subsequent conversation with lord Oxminster had made him easy on this head, but had inspired him with so decided a disgust for her, and such a hatred for his own folly and blindness, that every circumstance which brought her to his remembrance never failed to agitate him

to a distressing degree, and raise his fever very considerably. Under the fear of seeing her, he was several days before he would take the advice of his physician, who wished him to be driven out, in a low carriage, a short distance every day, thinking the air would be of the greatest use to him, for he was conscious that his nerves would receive a shock from such a rencounter that he was in no condition to bear; nor could he endure the thought of exposing lady Langdale to the pain of beholding a woman who had been the cause of such deep suffering to her. Finding himself quite unequal to speaking on this subject, she still remained ignorant of all those circumstances in Middleton's character known to the reader, and still bitterly lamented the seduction she believed her husband had been guilty of, so far as a married man can be said to seduce one who knows his engagements, and frequently cast about in her mind the means by which she could silently, but essentially assist the

K 5

unhappy

unhappy woman, and restore her to virtue, yet fearing to inquire from her husband what was her present situation, lest she should injure his health by sinking his spirits.

---

## CHAP. VI.

TOM had returned to the Grove on account of a valuable horse, and as Nicholson was an entire stranger, it is probable lady Langdale might have remained some time longer in a state of surmise respecting Middleton's situation, had not a little dapper apothecary presented himself one morning, saying "that as his friend, Mr. Richardson, had been sent for to sir William Miller, he was obliged to confide his patients to *his* care; he

he had therefore called to inquire after sir Edward Langdale, whose pulse he would have had the honour of feeling two hours before, had he not, unfortunately, been called to preside at the *accouchement* of Mrs. O'Hara, of whose marriage, about a fortnight ago, he presumed the present parties had all heard."

The present party knew nothing of Mrs. O'Hara ; the little doctor thought that odd, very *odd* indeed, for the lady in question was their near neighbour. He was first called in on account of a slight accident which occurred on the wedding morning, and was so fortunate as to obtain so great a place in the lady's favour, that she requested him to act the part of a father. "I thought all was not right ; we of the faculty are pretty quick-sighted, sir Edward—my good sir, your pulse has an inclination to gallop—but, as I was saying, I did not suspect the young widow, as she called herself, so far gone, or I should certainly have declined the office, and Mrs. Middle-

ton might have found a — good God, sir ! your pulse stops, goes on, and stops again, like the man's in Tristram Shandy—however the lady has a bouncing girl, with hair as black as her father's.—I will have the honour of sending you a saline draught immediately, sir Edward."

The baronet bowed assent, the little man danced out of the room, and the wonder-struck auditors gazed at each other, as if each were asking explanation of the other : at length, after a sorrowful pause, sir Edward said—"What a fool, what a cursed fool have I been to be duped by such a jade as this !"

"It is better to be sinned against than sinning," said his lady.

"I am glad you think so, lady Langdale," said the baronet, still in a tone of vexation.

Lady Langdale withdrew, as if to fetch something from the next room, but in reality to enable him to recover serenity. She found Nicholson, who, full of the important

portant news she had just gained from the mistress of the house, and anxious to repair, as far as was in her power, the mischief she had once occasioned by the mention of Middleton, began instantly with—

“ Bless my life, my lady; what things do come to pass to be zure ! It’s all come out now, that *that* wicked woman was in a family-way by my lord Oxminster’s man, before ever she comed to our house at all ; and so it’s all as plain as a pike-staff, that it was she that took in my master, a good-for-nothing hussy ! but indeed I knowed *that* from the first. I that have nursed him on my knee a thousand times, and a fine sensible child he was, as ever sun shone on, I knowed he was drawn in, as it were, to be zure ; but, as I was saying, my lady, she ha feathered her nest to some purpose ; she has got money and jewels without end, besides many a bank-note that master gave her to keep quiet, and not alarm you ; for though to be zure when the shock did come, it was  
bad

bad enough, but you see he wanted to put it off as much as he could, and so he gave her all her own way."

This proof of the baronet's tenderness called the tears into Griselda's eyes, which poor Nicholson, not quite comprehending, she proceeded to say—

" Ah, to be zure, your ladyship has been cruelly used for such a strumpet as that, to have all these fine things, and money without end, out of your ladyship's purse, as it were; but, as I was a-saying, the first race-day, who should she zee but her old sweetheart, O'Hara, and he was not over-and-above glad to see her; for why—it seems he had somehow cheated her—set a thief to catch a thief; but, however, she gets hold of him, and he drives her on to the race-course in my master's curricule, a shameful thing! and then she told him what riches she'd got out of sir Edward, and they laid their heads together how to get more; but finding what sort of a turn things took, and that there was no more to be had,

had, they got married ; but what's the height of all her impudence, she goes to say that every thing she has done is quite right, both as to cheating people's eyes out of their heads, and living with their husbands ; and that she has only married O'Hara because she must humour the superstitious age ; there's for you, my lady ! to think that such a learned man as my master, that has lived in Lunnon so many years, and been among countesses and dutchesses, should be drawn in by such a thing as she."

Sir Edward's bell rung, and lady Langdale learned, with great pleasure, that he was now willing to take a short ride.

In a few moments the carriage was at the door ; he took his wife's arm down a little garden, at the gate of which two men stood ; the servant desired them to stand aside ; sir Edward *commanded* them.

One of them answered by shewing a writ, and immediately arresting him at the suit of a jeweller in the city.

Sir



Sir Edward recollected that he had received two or three notes from some shop-keeper, which he had told the farmer's wife, who was at that time his principal attendant, to throw into the fire.

The deadly paleness of his countenance, by withdrawing her attention from the circumstance, and fixing it on him alone, inspired Griselda with courage; she besought him to return into the parlour, and that she would settle the affair.

"We cannot lose sight of our prisoner, madam, but we will take his bail; you have only to get two respectable gentlemen."

"But we have no friends here, and the sum itself cannot be much: here, take my purse, my watch."

"It won't do, madam; the sum is five hundred and seventy pounds."

The men followed sir Edward into the parlour, but Griselda entreated their permission to allow him to retire to his bedroom, to which they made no objection. When she was alone with him there, she mentioned

mentioned the amount of the bill, at which he was astonished, saying that he had indeed bought some trinkets for Middleton there, or rather he had entered the shop with her, while she chose them, but he had not supposed them worth more than twenty pounds; that doubtless the shopkeeper was a rascal, who would either force him to pay the bill, or by defending it in a court of justice, expose his conduct in a manner he was, in his present state of health, utterly unequal to endure; and added, with an oath, that tradesmen were all rascals, and it was in vain to contend with their chicanery; the bill must be paid some time, but the great object was obtaining present relief.

"I will obtain it, my love; I will be back with you in an hour," said Griselda.

She immediately got into the carriage, and proceeded to the jeweller's. She found him a sensible intelligent man, who, on her remonstrating with him on the largeness of the bill, and his understanding who she was, appeared

appeared equally desirous with herself to adjust the affair amicably, and solicitous to treat her with the respect due to her rank and sex ; he produced several written orders, in her name, for different articles of jewellery, which had been sent to Middleton ; and said, that as soon as he began to suspect this person had no claim to the name she had assumed, he had written to sir Edward to request his permission to send them ; that having received no answer, and being told, in general terms, verbally, sir Edward would pay him on his recovery, he had suffered the lady to take trinkets to the amount spoken of ; since which, he had repeatedly applied to sir Edward, who having, as he was informed, thrown his letters, unread, into the fire, he had been induced to proceed in a way unpleasant to himself, from a sense of its necessity.

Griselda apologized for her husband, whose illness she spoke of in an affecting manner : the jeweller said that he should be very glad to get his trinkets again, and thought

thought it was possible so to do, by threatening Mrs. O'Hara with a prosecution, for obtaining them by false pretences. Lady Langdale would not allow him to proceed to any steps which might injure her health, under existing circumstances, but suggested the propriety of sending for O'Hara : this was accordingly done; the fellow, conscious of many peccadilloes in his own conduct, as well as that of his *cara sposa*, was exceedingly alarmed at the sight of lady Langdale; and when threatened by the judicious tradesman, in that way which was most likely to alarm him, with being an abettor of his wife's villainy, in assuming a fictitious name for the purpose of fraud, he readily consented to deliver all the trinkets he could find in their lodgings to the shopkeeper, who accompanied him. Those which had been tacitly given to Middleton, by sir Edward's presence at the time of purchase, Griselda requested might be taken off the account, and returned to the woman; these she paid for immediately;

ately; the rest the jeweller gladly deposited in his drawers, while Griselda requested he would inform her what the law expenses amounted to; he apprehended about five pounds; Griselda requested him to take a twenty-pound note, as a compensation for his loss, in being deprived of the sale of his goods for several weeks; and left a friend in the man she had encountered as an enemy.

She returned with a countenance that told her bosom's lord he was at liberty, and half restored him to his usual spirits; but what was the surprise and vexation of both, to be told by Nicholson that the men, on her presenting them a gratification for their trouble, had said, "it was a pity they should be forced to watch so generous a gentleman, but 'twas a fact that there was another writ against him for eighty-four pounds from a milliner, and, if she had a mind, she might give him a hint of it."

Sir Edward sunk back in his chair, and  
covered

covered his face with his hands ; while Griselda, who began to suspect the first arrest had been but the beginning of troubles, inquired, in a faint voice, if the men knew any thing of the account ? They answered they were employed by lawyer Scout, and they knew nothing more of the matter.

" Inquire of the men," said Griselda, " if they have other arrests against us, and press them to tell the truth."

Nicholson returned with the assurance that they had not, but they had heard that Marshall, the silk-mercator, had said he had a bill of forty-five pounds against sir Edward, but he scorned to distress a gentleman in his sickness.

Sir Edward unveiled his eyes, and gave a look his lady fully understood.

" You see, my love," said she, smiling, " how unjust you were this morning to tradesmen ; I have settled the whole of your debt with the jeweller for less than fifty pounds, and made him so much your friend,

friend, that I have no doubt but he will enable me to settle with this generous mercer."

"And perhaps then," interrupted sir Edward, "they will give bail for me to this milliner; pray ask them, for I am confident that till these fellows are off the premises, I shall know not a moment's repose. I was wrong, very wrong, to condemn people who had an undoubted right to conclude me a villain."

The hurried, though desponding tone in which these words were uttered, convinced Griselda that the affair had indeed made a deep impression on the mind of the baronet; she pressed her lips to his pale forehead, and hastened back to the jeweller, before whom she laid her repeater, and a diamond hoop ring of great value, and inquired if he would advance her a hundred pounds on the security before him?

"I have only sixty pounds in the house," replied the gentleman; "but I will lend you

you that, my lady, without any security at all, except a note of hand to prevent mistakes, in case of accident to either of us."

Griselda turned her head from the speaker to conceal the emotion she felt: on the other side of the street she perceived the name of Marshall, in large letters, over the door of a silk-mercier.

"I wish," said she to her new friend, "you would send for your neighbour here." The shopman flew over in a moment, and returned with a little withered old man, who, bowing, begged to know what he should have the honour of showing her?

"You have a bill against sir Edward Langdale, Mr. Marshall — I wish to settle it."

The mercier pulled a leather case from his side-pocket, and presented a bill of various articles, amounting to about forty-five pounds.

Griselda desired a receipt, and the two tradesmen stept into an adjoining counting-house;



ing-house ; in a few minutes she was requested to join them there, when a chair was, with great humility, presented her by Mr. Marshall, who, in giving the receipt, said—

“ I hope, madam, that your ladyship will take no offence in what I am going to say, but as most likely your ladyship is not much in the way of these things, being a stranger, as 'twere, in these parts, you will not be angry at my informing you, that it is a great pity you should pay me in cash-notes, seeing that your ladyship's draft, at two months, or three months, would be very good payment, as times go, my lady ; but these doctors, and innkeepers, and these kind of people, why they must have cash, my lady ; and therefore had you not better give me a line on your steward, or banker, and keep this sixty pounds for your current expences ? ”

“ I am exceedingly obliged to you, sir, and will do that most willingly ; my steward at the Grange, about twenty-five miles from hence, will have three hundred pounds

pounds for me next month, and it will suit me very well; but allow me to ask, if you suppose Mr. Scout, the attorney, will accept the mode of payment you point out, in a suit he has commenced for eighty-four pounds, being a milliner's bill?"

"Undoubtedly; either of us will settle the affair for you; he will not refuse our endorsements."

Stamps were produced, and the affair soon arranged. The repeater and ring still lay on the counter, when, taking them up, the jeweller said—

"Your ladyship may give me a draft, or a note for this money, whichever suits you; but I cannot allow you to leave these things behind you; especially as the watch has a crest, and might attract attention."

Griselda gave him a draft at a month, not forgetting the interest, and then thankfully withdrew, attended to the door by both him and Mr. Marshall, with the most obsequious attention, and assured that the

bailiffs should be withdrawn by Scout immediately.

The baronet was pacing slowly up and down his little parlour when she returned, with an air of despair in his mien that cut her to the heart, and contributed, with the fatigue, fright, and anxiety, she had suffered, to make her feel extremely indisposed; he inquired most tenderly after her, and reproached himself as the cause of her sufferings. This affection roused her to new exertion; she told him, with tearful joy, that he was now perfectly at liberty, and exultingly shewed him the money she had procured for their more immediate expences; declaring that she had never felt the possession of twice as many hundreds give her half the pleasure.

For several succeeding days sir Edward went out constantly, and gained all the benefit he had proposed from the exercise; but about the end of the week, the family were alarmed by the appearance of Tom, who

who came express to inform them that the child was exceedingly ill, and Gilbert thought it her duty to acquaint them with the fact, though extremely fearful of alarming them.

The distress of Griselda will be more easily conceived than expressed. Parting from her child, at a time when its health was extremely delicate, had been very painful to her; and every letter she had received from Gilbert had made her anxious heart throb with desire to resume her maternal duties, though she had ever avoided giving the slightest expression of her wishes to her husband; but he now saw and partook of her solicitude, and urged her to return to the child with as much speed as her health would allow; proposing that Tom and Nicholson should remain with him, which was concluded upon.

Lady Langdale wrote to her husband as soon as she had seen her boy, and her reports were full as favourable as could be expected; but in the next letter she gave

a poor account of him. She wrote every morning, and the information fluctuated with the day ; but whether her hopes were raised or depressed, her letters were the source of consolation, the food of comfort, to the baronet. He read them and read them again ; every night the messenger of love was placed behind his pillow, and every morning his first inquiry was after the post ; if Griselda was obliged to write a short letter, he seemed to consider that he was injured, and had a right to be splenetic for the rest of the day ; when he got a long one, he turned the key in his door, and retired with his prize, with the gout of an epicure, and the seclusion of a miser.

Though he was constantly told not to expect a letter every day, yet the very first time his correspondent failed he grew uneasy to the highest degree ; and after fretting and fuming away the whole morning, he called Tom, and declared his intention of going one stage towards the Grove that evening ; and as Tom highly approved  
the

The motion, observing, "that badly foaks were always best at hoam," a very little time was lost in preparing for the journey; and the one stage was converted into two, which were borne so well, that on the evening of the day but one following, sir Edward found himself, at night-fall, on the skirts of his own domain, which was now blooming in the first rich tints of autumn, and 'looked like an earthly Eden ere the possessors' fall.

A train of deep and painful musing fell on the mind of sir Edward as the post-chaise wound slowly up the gentle eminence on which the mansion stood. Every tree that waved its leafy arms across his path, every breeze that wafted fragrance from his garden, and every corn-field, whose yellow verdure caught the last ray of departing light, seemed to reproach him with his folly, and say—"Thou art taking a farewell of us for ever; we who gladdened thy infant gaze, who blessed thy maturer years; we, thine early friends, thy best

L 3                  possessions,

possessions, are destined to a stranger, and torn from thee for ever."

According to sir Edward's desire, the carriage drove to the stable-yard, where he alighted, and thence walked slowly to the house, as if he took a pleasure in entering, as a wandering stranger, the mansion he had justly forfeited. He entered unperceived, for all was dark and still; he sat down for a moment in the breakfast-parlour, and was about to ring, but recollecting, in the next, that his bell might possibly disturb the child, he paused. With the thoughts of his child, a new train of ideas had rushed into his mind. He was now about to behold that little being, whose claims on his heart Griselda had, a thousand times, so eloquently told, and nature, still more eloquent than she, pleaded for in language irresistible. Sir Edward rose—"The boy must sleep," said he, "the women are so very still." He pursued his way towards the room Griselda had appointed for the nursery; perceiving a light in

in her dressing-room, he would have entered, but fearful of alarming her, he did not open the door, but went gently into the adjoining bed-room; the door was half open which joined this room to the dressing-room; he stept toward it, and perceived Griselda, with a candle in her hand, kneeling beside a cradle; the light fell full on a little face, on which his own features were indelibly impressed—impressed by the hand of Death himself.

Struck, as by the bolt of Heaven, the baronet stood silent and immoveable. Griselda set down the candle, and imprinted a long, long kiss upon the marble cheek of her departed boy; then turning her streaming eyes towards heaven, as if pursuing the spotless soul of the innocent babe towards its eternal mansion, and lowly bending before the awful scene she contemplated—"Accept, oh God of Mercies!" she exclaimed, "accept this sacrifice! Thy chastening hand, I humbly trust, hath punished the faults of the father in the son,



and will perfect thy goodness by purifying him here, and preparing him for hereafter. Father, thy *will be done* ! Oh ! pardon the imperfect resignation of the afflicted worm that glorifies thy goodness in the husband thou hast spared, and the child thou hast reclaimed !”

Her voice, suppressed and feeble, ceased to be heard, but her moving lips still seemed to hold communion with their God, and to gain the strength she besought. She arose, and was throwing a handkerchief over the face of the corpse, when Gilbert came to the gallery door, and told her, in a hurried voice, that she really thought her master was coming, for she had heard Tom’s voice in the kitchen. Griselda wiped her eyes, exclaiming—

“ Oh, my dear Edward ! what shall I do to save you from the pain of this sad meeting !—My poor, poor Edward, this is hard on you indeed !”

She was going down with Gilbert, when her own name, feebly pronounced from the  
the

the bed-room, caught her ear ; she turned round, and beheld her husband, who, pointing at the cradle, flung himself on the sofa, and gave way to a burst of sorrow, such as she had never witnessed, and such as only the heart of the wife and mother could estimate or participate.

“ This is *my* victim,” said sir Edward at length ; “ poor little innocent, I have been thy murderer !—yet thy mother will not curse me ?”

“ My dear Edward,” cried Griselda, straining him closely to her throbbing breast, “ do not speak thus, or you will break my heart. We are called on to resign our darling, but we will not aggravate the difficulty of our task by recollections that render sufferings more poignant, and reproaches that give a zest to affliction ; let us look forward, with hope, to him who wounds only to heal, and chastens the son whom he receives.”

The baronet did not reply ; he knelt down by the cradle, and with a shaking

hand again uncovered the face, and gazed on it with an eager, fond, and yet fearful look; for though lovely, it was the face of death, and it was awful.

After a long pause—"God's will be done!" said the father; and then rising, with a trembling step, and a frame exhausted by fatigue and recent agitation, he sought his own apartment, followed by his silent but sympathizing spouse, who, with great anxiety, attended to every thing that could contribute to his comfort as an invalid, or lessen his sorrow as a father; conscious that the bitterest pang she had felt in parting from her first-born, the dear being that had awakened in her heart the finest sensations, the sweetest chords of existence, was not comparable to the keener pang of remorse, thus mingled with the grief of a self-reproaching father.

The morning on which the infant heir of the Grove slept in the tomb of his ancestors again awakened the bitter grief of *his father*; but the mother's sacrifice was  
made

made with meek and silent resignation; she resigned him to the house appointed for all, and bent all the powers of her mind to the restoration of her husband's spirits; though unwilling, as a Christian, to check that salutary sorrow, which leadeth to a peace "the world can neither give nor take away;" yet she sought to turn his thoughts rather to the author of his punishment, as a God of mercy, than an avenger of sin; and to render the tear of earthly sorrow the harbinger of heavenly joy.

The child was interred early in the morning, and every thing relating to this painful affair was kept at a distance from sir Edward's apartment; some time, however, after the funeral was over, Griselda observed an unusual bustle in the house; she rang the bell to learn the occasion of it, but rang a second time without being attended to.

"What can be the matter?" said sir Edward, with an air of alarm.

"Nothing that can signify much, my love, to either of us," said lady Langdale; "but I am not pleased with the servants for neglecting us at such a time as this."

Tom at this moment entered, and beckoned his lady to the door; Griselda, recollecting sir Edward's arrest, was seized with a tremor which made her unable to move; Tom saw her situation, and came forward, carefully shutting the door, and setting his back against it. His appearance in mourning struck sir Edward, but his lady was alarmed by his countenance; both gazed upon him without speaking.

"I be forced to tell yo," said Tom, drawing his hand over his eyes; "but it's cursed hard, I'll be damn'd if it ben't; but there's an execution in the house; those fellows comed in while we were at church."

"Get the carriage, Tom," said the baronet, in great trepidation, "and drive us to the Elms."

Tom burst into tears, and did not offer to move.

"My

"My good fellow," said Griselda, "we must exert ourselves; obey your master as quick as possible."

"The Elms," said Tom, sobbing, "the Elms is top full of bailiffs and rascals; Mr. Allen is below, talking with all his might, and promising them all he have in the world; and the people here be civilish, but down at the Elms, he do zay they be like zo many devils; but if your ladyship pleases, when night comes, I can smack you and his honour off to sir William Elland's, and zo we shall manage to 'scape."

"The Elms!" repeated sir Edward; "how dare any one enter the Elms?"

"Why, zur, zom people say az how it be my lady's, and zom say az how it ben't; but these fellows do zay az how they shall *try* that point; and they be pulling things all to pieces to make a sale; they do knock down the books, and pull down the pictures, Mr. Allen do zay it be a zheame to zee; and all old madam's tapstry be gone to rack."

"I have

"I have no heir," said Griselda, with a look of despondency.

She raised her eyes, they fell upon her husband, and the agony painted on his look called her in an instant from the morbid dejection into which she was falling; she caught his hand, crying—"My dear, I conjure you not to look so wretched; I have twenty houses at the Elms, in which there is room to nurse you, and where every inhabitant will be proud to attend you, and where no one can dare to intrude on you; but let us not forsake ourselves, or yield our property to these plunderers; remember how nearly we had lost a large sum at York for want of seeing after it; let us call Allen, and inquire what all this ruin means."

Tom vanished to fetch Mr. Allen.

"I know, I know too well, what it all means," said the baronet, with a heart-rending sigh; "but wretched, ruined as I am, unable to exert myself, I cannot be schooled by Allen, lady Langdale."

"Schooled!—

"*Schooled!*—oh, my love, how your prejudices mislead you! Allen is one of the most excellent of——"

"Is he not *your* friend, Griselda? and can your friend love the man who——there he comes—I will not see—save me, Griselda, from this, and——"

Griselda flew to the door, she seized the old man's hand, and led him to an adjoining room; the traces of recent tears were in his eyes, and he shook with grief and anger.

"I hear there are sad doings at the Elms, Allen?"

"Sad doings *indeed*, my lady; I am afraid all your pictures will be ruined—all sold for an old song."

"I will redeem them with my jewels; go with me, Allen; my word was never doubted yet; let us go and save something from the wreck."

"They are hardened wretches, my lady; I never saw such beings in my life."

"I will take Tom; tell him to prepare  
the



the carriage; no one will offer me personal insult; I must learn to bear the humiliations that await me."

Allen retired, and Griselda informed sir Edward she found there was a necessity for her going to the Elms, which he greatly opposed, lest she should be insulted, until she explained to him the necessity she was in of doing it, especially on account of two fine pictures, which were heirlooms of great value, and which, if not personally claimed, might be sold with the furniture. He admitted the necessity, and lamented that he durst not accompany her; but this indulgence was out of the question, as they had but too much reason to believe there might be several writs out against him. Ruin stared him in the face on every side—the ice was broke—and the wintry torrent of distress poured on him from every quarter.

The baronet, bent beneath the storm—  
weakened by his illness—conscious of his  
folly—that lofty mind, whose superior in-  
telligence

telligence appeared given for the noblest purposes of existence, now weak and dispirited, was at once bereft of resources, incapable of exertion, and devoid of fortitude. Liberty, the *dearest* blessing of life, appeared to his proud and independent spirit the *only* blessing he had left; and his dread of losing that operated like a spell upon his mind, and chained his faculties, so as to deprive him of the very power of securing it. In Griselda's presence he felt as if under the protection of a tutelary angel, who would defend him from every danger; but the moment she left him, his heart sunk; the train of evils by which he was surrounded again rose to his mind, and enveloped him in confusion, anguish, and dismay.

The officers of the law, followed by an appraiser, a crowd of brokers, and others, were proceeding to dislodge the pictures from those places the fair hands of their mistress had assigned them, at the very moment she entered the house. Already repenting her temerity, shocked at  
the

the publicity of her appearance the very day her child was buried, and nearly overpowered by the severity of these reiterated strokes, Griselda would perhaps have immediately returned if the nature of this circumstance had not been particularly pressing. She knew the value of her pictures ; they had principally been purchased by her, and it was her *duty*, if obliged to sell them, to part with them to the best advantage ; she saw plainly that her husband, let the state of his affairs be ever so bad, had set his heart on performing his promise of holding the Elms sacred ; and she dreaded the effect any disappointment might have upon his health, in its present critical state. Whatever were the troubles she might encounter, all appeared light in comparison with the loss she should sustain in him, at a time when she had every reason to hope he was restored, not only to her, but to himself.

In whatever line of life man may happen to be situated, though lost in ignorance, hardened by habit, or brutalized by  
vice,

vice, yet there will be moments when the power of woman will be acknowledged, and the influence of her claims be felt. The moment lady Langdale alighted from her carriage, and taking the arm of her venerable steward, entered her patrimonial mansion, a gentle buzz, followed by a calm silence, succeeded; she proceeded to the room where a fine Madona was just being taken from the chimney-piece, and in a calm manner required the authority of the principal for this proceeding; finding the execution was for six hundred and fifty pounds, to which the baronet, with his accustomed negligence, had suffered great law-charges to be attached, she commanded the man instantly to replace the pictures, and not dare to touch a single article beyond his right to distress for.

"The furniture be all old—it'll fetch nothing without the pictures," said the man, surlily.

Griselda, who had been afraid that the  
sum

sum was much larger, said she should purchase it in at that money, therefore there need be no more trouble on the subject ; and opening a case of diamonds, so fully convinced the man of her power, that he offered immediately to withdraw ; she told him that she wished the furniture of the house to be appraised, except the pictures ; but insisted on the furniture being replaced exactly as it had been found ; but was perfectly willing that proper persons should remain in it till she had fulfilled her engagement.

Obedience followed her mandate, mildly as it was pronounced ; the crowd gave way on every side, alike struck with her beauty, her mourning dress, and the occasion which had brought her amongst them ; at Allen's motion they all quitted the room, which he locked, and gave lady Langdale the key ; who, ordering the people some refreshment, instantly returned to the Grove, with a celerity that surprised even the anxious

rous and impatient baronet, who met her at the library door, with a look that told her all he had suffered in her absence.

" 'Tis a trifle, my love," said Griselda, "that will be paid by a few trinkets. I arrived in time to save my pictures, and in fact every thing else, and to-morrow we will go there."

"I cannot move, Griselda—I shall be seized. Tom has heard of three writs against me."

"Allen, and any of our neighbours, will give bail for you; we are not at York now; we are in our own country, surrounded by neighbours and friends."

"Ah, my Griselda! I have no friend but you! I am in my own country, but my conduct there has made enemies, not friends, of my neighbours. You forget, my love, that we are at present under prescription, even if poverty had not fallen upon us; and that there is not one person in the country round, whom even the late melancholy occasion will bring near us.

Perhaps

Perhaps, indeed, I could get bail, but I can die rather than solicit it. Suppose I were immediately to sell this estate—Good God, what a fool, what a madman have I been !” He paced the room in great agitation.

Griselda spoke not till the tempest of his mind had somewhat subsided ; then kindly taking his hand, she said—

“ My dear, I have been much to blame in not inquiring more about your letters since your illness ; my motives were good, but it was a wrong species of delicacy ; for as it was impossible for you to answer them yourself, *I* ought to have done it ; there is nothing that irritates a creditor so much as neglecting their demands ; a gentle refusal may be borne, but who can endure the contempt implied by silence ? It is our mismanagement that has brought all these people upon us at once, and plunged us into such dreadful difficulties ; we must however compromise as well as we are able, and beg forbearance of the  
*kind,*

*kind*, that we may be enabled to satisfy the demands of the *pressing*."

"I cannot beg mercy of tradesmen, Griselda."

"Then we will pay the tradesmen immediately, and let the gentlemen wait; their demands are ten times larger I am afraid, for your bills, as far as I can learn, are all trifling."

"That is impossible; my debts of honour must be paid on demand; in fact, they are no longer such, for I gave bonds to their amount to all my friends before I fought with Oxminster."

"Your *friends* were very generous to accept them at such a time. Oh Edward! you have never known a *friend*; little has the independence of your spirit suited with such associates. How could they *dare* to distress you at such a time as that?"

"They *did*, however, and I thank them for it *now*."

"Indeed, my love!"

"*Indeed*; for they taught me how to estimate



fimate the world, and—they taught me how to value *you*.”

“Then I am bound to forgive, and almost led to *thank* them, my dear Edward,” said Griselda, tenderly.

After a long pause sir Edward said—

“My horses shall be all sold immediately; Tom shall take them to London—he may be trusted.”

“My jewels shall go with them, and my pictures,” said Griselda, eagerly; “and I have a fine fall of wood ready for stripping—and I have a considerable quarry of beautiful stone at the Elm Scar—the furniture of this house is new and valuable—we have three carriages, all very elegant; one is sufficient. Oh, my love, when we have exerted all our means for redeeming our affairs, who knows but we may save the Grove?”

Sir Edward shook his head incredulously.

“Well,” said Griselda, “but will you allow Allen and me to attempt it? You see I know all the worst, my love; and as my  
good

good father, was particularly anxious to make me a woman of business, from knowing I should one day stand alone in the world; and your health renders it impossible you should undertake to manage for yourself; will you allow me to relieve you from a burthen you are at present unequal to encounter?"

"You know not the task you undertake, Griselda—to save the Grove is impossible. How can you contend with cunning, or thwart avarice? and what else will you meet with in the world of gambling peers, or low-born shopkeepers? No, no, never mind—we will run away to the Grange. I must be now content to be your pensioner there; for I must confess, I should not like to live at the Elms, and see the Grove in the possession of another."

"I am delighted with the idea," said Griselda; "but we must go there without fear of being followed by duns, whether lords or linen-drappers. When we go to Yorkshire, let us take the independence

of the county as our copy. We will owe no man money, though we owe every man good will. We will have the pride of honesty, and the satisfaction of independence, which can only be attained by economy, and preserved by self-denial."

"True; I will give you my letters in the morning; and I will see Allen, my love; we will consider how we may break the storm, or lighten its effects."

---

## CHAP. VII.

WE cannot enter on this chapter without begging our female readers just to glance over the conversation of Griselda in our last. They will perceive, that where it was possible to find fault with herself, she used the pronoun *I*; but where it was impossible

possible to speak without referring either immediately or remotely to that shamefully foolish conduct in her husband, from whence all their trouble originated, she never failed to use the plural *we*. This little word, thus appropriated, pronounced naturally, as if she indeed felt that they had gone hand-in-hand through error, and should do the same through reformation, while it soothed the asperity of self-reproach in sir Edward's mind, did not lessen the sense of what he owed to her exertions and affections, yet preserved him from the mortification of *seeming* to owe it, to which his pride could ill submit, and which, if felt, could not have failed to sour his temper, prey on his spirits, and effectually ruin his health, at present in so critical a state, that every accession of melancholy seemed to sap the springs of existence.

If any woman, however situated, will take the trouble of reading her husband's heart, she will find, that although he is capable of *feeling* gratitude towards her, in

its purest, warmest form, yet it is not the principle by which the pride of his nature allows him to *believe* he is actuated ; and the greater and more self-evident his obligations to his wife may be, the more backward he will be to acknowledge them, if she presumes upon them. If, therefore, she wishes to be loved, as well as esteemed—if her heart, desirous to enjoy the pure intercourse of connubial friendship,

“ Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,  
Each other's pillow for divine repose,”

she must be content to resign all claims of power from the right of obligation ; to “ possess as though she possessed not ;” and to receive, with grateful pleasure, every emanation of love from a heart which owes *her* unbounded tenderness.

Many ladies will say—“ This is a hard saying—who can bear it ?” They will be very willing to be very generous to their lords, for generosity is a pleasant virtue ; but to be content to do nothing, when *their* fortune,

fortune, *their* interest, *their* exertion, is doing all, appears to them unjust—nay, almost impossible. If a man by his extravagance has forfeited, or by his misfortunes lost the power of being master of his own house, surely it is enough to be good to him—generous to him; one cannot do more.

Then, ladies, you may have tractable husbands, hypocritical husbands, fawning husbands; but the homage of a fond and grateful heart never will be yours. You may have decent companions for *this* world in the beings who are shackled, not reformed; but you will never know the sublime satisfaction of preparing the candidate for a better.

Nothing less than the perfect esteem, and the deep sense of Griselda's love, felt by the baronet, would have induced him (notwithstanding the embarrassment of his circumstances) to have seen, and laid open his affairs, before Allen, such was the prejudice his pride and his conscience had

M. 3.

equally

equally formed against this excellent old man. He expected questions which could not be answered, and comments which could not be endured; but yet he had such a reliance on the affection and respect Allen must necessarily have for lady Langdale, that he hoped this unpleasant interview would be got over without exciting much irritation on his part; and he resolved to exert himself, for her sake, to endure the old fellow's insolence and tediousness.

Whatever might be Allen's private opinion of the baronet, the sight of him affected him in the most sensible manner. His mourning habit, his extreme paleness, and the idea of helplessness, conveyed by his right arm being still in a sling, struck forcibly on the humane heart of the honest steward, who, with no weaknesses of his own to lament, could still feel for those of others.

"Poor Miss Grizy!" said he, internally;  
 "if the sight of this naughty man affects  
 me,

me, no wonder you are led away so ; he was her only love, poor lamb !”

To Allen's salute, sir Edward returned a civil bow ; the old man laid down two heavy books on the table—

“ These are my accounts, sir Edward—would you be pleased to examine them ?”

“ *Your* accounts,” replied sir Edward, with a little haughtiness, “ can always be examined without trouble or regret ; but you *are* come now to examine *mine*, Mr. Allen, which are by no means in the same situation.”

“ Give me leave,” said Griselda, “ in the first place, to lay before you both these letters, which I have just got from the post.”

They were all from creditors of one description or other, and Allen minuted their demands, as he silently looked over their contents : at length one was opened by sir Edward, in which his dear friend, lord Bellingham, was excessively sorry to trouble him for the thousand pounds he had won at York ; but being cursedly cut



of cash, he could not help it; however, to accommodate his friend, he would take his pair of curricie-horses, Jackall and High-flyer, in lieu of the money, and begged they might be returned by the groom, as it would save trouble.

"This nobleman, without cash," said Allen, "takes an odd method of relieving his necessities."

"He must have the horses," said sir Edward; "for he is a man of whom I would not ask a favour for the world, so thoroughly do I despise him."

"I will speak to Tom," said Allen.

In a few minutes he returned, and laying a stamp before sir Edward—

"Can your honour manage to write with that hand?—the draft only needs your signature."

Sir Edward, surprised, read a draft on Allen, at sight, for a thousand pounds.

"What is the meaning of this, Mr. Allen?—I do not wish to become your debtor for a thousand pounds."

"Nor

"Nor will you ; for I am willing to give you eleven hundred for the horses in question, and the other hundred I will pay you in cash. Pardon me, sir Edward, if I take a wrong method in shewing you how common a thing it is for a gentleman to pay twenty-five shillings in the pound ; and how necessary, where he has many claimants, to make the most of his money. This beggarly lord has heard of your distress, and has actually begun a treaty for Jackall, on the strength of your known indifference to business, and your fear of betraying your circumstances by a public sale of your horses ; and Mr. Melville has offered seven hundred and fifty guineas for this single horse : by accepting my offer, you save your property, pay your debt honourably, and disappoint a knave."

The baronet signed the draft, and as he passed it into the old man's hand, he pressed that hand, saying, in great trepidation—

"Allen, I have never *known* you."

M 5.

"Then

"Then know me *now*, sir Edward, for a man who is not only your *true* friend; but a man capable of feeling what is due to your situation. I confess I have been bitterly disappointed in you; but the 'time past may suffice for folly;' God forbid that I should bruise whom he hath afflicted! I do not forget, that in the madness of your extravagance, you touched not the property of the fatherless; and though you fled with a wanton, yet you suffered not the tongue of the slanderer to pollute the name of your spouse: for these reasons have I set myself against your defamers, and for these reasons will I struggle with your besiegers now; every man shall be paid lawfully, but no man shall be paid that to which he hath no claim."

The old man paused, but the tear coursed down his ruddy cheek, unblanched by sixty winters, and discoursed largely to the heart: but sir Edward was little able to endure the agitation produced by scenes like this, which Allen perceiving, proposed  
to

to retire, saying he would return in the evening ; but before sir Edward could reply, a servant announced the arrival of sir William Elland, which all the parties heard with some pleasure, though the glow of shame evidently tinged the baronet's pale cheek, as he recollected the state in which his cousin, in the lapse of one short year, would find his house and his affairs.

Griselda immediately withdrew to give a mournful welcome to their friend ; but to sir Edward's great surprise, Allen did not follow, but closed the door carefully after her ; then going close up to the sofa, he said—

“ It is probable that sir William will take you back with him, and, in my humble opinion, it will be a wise step ; but as there are men on the wait for you, and even a trifling privation of liberty is painful to an ailing man, take these checks, and draw on me to the amount of two thousand five hundred pounds—John Allen's drafts will be cashed by any banking-house

house in this county—and, for your private expences, here are fifty pounds and fifteen guineas. Bear up your spirits, and guard your health, remembering that your life and welfare includes the happiness of an angel."

The old man waited not an answer; and soon after he had withdrawn, sir William entered with lady Langdale. He was hurt at seeing his cousin look so ill, but adverted slightly to that, and the late loss they had sustained, saying, that circumstances alone had prevented him from begging them to have been present at his marriage.

"Marriage!—you married?" cried the baronet.

"Why, ah—so it *is*," said sir William; "you see I could not help envying you, and that set me seriously to thinking about it; and Miss Slingsby being in my way, I at last began to make love to her, which quickened a little when I found that she had got money—though I must do both myself  
and

and her the justice to say, her want of it might have deferred our marriage, though it would not have prevented it."

"You surprise me," said Griselda; "but I am truly glad to hear of your marriage with a person I esteemed so much on so very short an acquaintance."

"I was surprised myself," returned the baronet; "but the fact is this—after I had been some time at lady Elizabeth's, sometimes debating with my prudence, which advised me either to marry a woman with money, or not to marry at all till my estate was cleared, and at others yielding to my wishes, and almost asking the question, it so happened, that lady Elizabeth was, as you know, suddenly called from home, and Miss Slingsby was of course forced to go home; so I was left in a very melancholy, mopish sort of a way, in which condition, on her return, her ladyship found me. Well, she did not come back, as I thought, in the best of all humours for a lover, having all the inclination in the world to rail at the  
perfidy

perfidy and cruelty of men ; but in the course of a day or two, perceiving my melancholy increase, and yet that I did not offer to leave her house, she made a virtue of necessity, by converting her melancholy visitant into a grateful and happy man ; thus addressing me one morning after breakfast:—

‘ I perceive, William, you have a great regard for Miss Slingsby ; and I approve your choice exceedingly, for I love her as if she were my daughter.’

‘ Your ladyship is an excellent judge of female worth ; to be sure I do admire Miss Slingsby, but at my time of life, marrying for love is not quite the thing.’

‘ I will be plain with you, sir William ; my estate is at my own disposal, and it is my intention to give ten thousand pounds out of it to Miss Slingsby ; if that fortune is worth your acceptance, which, from my knowledge of your situation, I really think it is, you may make her an offer with great propriety ; especially as I assure you your  
children

children by *Miss Slingsby* will be my children ; though I will be candid enough to tell you, there is a child now in the world whom I shall consider an *equal* claimant."

Griselda burst into tears; the baronet, much affected, waved his hand for sir William to continue.

" I have little left to say," resumed he, " for the drama was soon after finished, and a fortnight ago I brought home my bride. Knowing you were in York, I addressed a letter to a friend in that neighbourhood, informing you of this event, which he was obliged to return to me, as you had left your lodgings and were returned to the Grove."

Sir William, as soon as he observed lady Langdale's spirits were a little recovered, entreated her to favour his lady with her company ; to which she consented, as soon as she should be able to assure her that all the bridal bustle should be over, till when, she could not do it either with pleasure or propriety ;



propriety ; but she would give him leave, she said, to take away sir Edward sooner, as a mourning house was by no means calculated for his present state of health, and she durst trust him to the care of lady El-land, who had been used to the tender offices of a nurse to her worthy father.

Sir Edward knew too well what was going forward in his own house to resist this plan, though he now in turn felt that parting from Griselda was leaving half his soul behind him ; but the recollection how lately he had left her in the most heart-rending circumstances, sealed his lips, and forbade him the privilege of complaint. From all the conversation he had in the course of the day with sir William, he could not learn that that gentleman knew the present situation of his affairs ; but that he was come with the benevolent intention of condoling his lady for the loss of her boy, and in a manner to restore both to society, appeared the sole purport of his visit. As it had been the intention of the family.

family to sleep at the Elms that night, they carried sir William thither, and from thence, the following day, sir Edward accompanied him in his carriage to his house.

Sleepless had been the night, and sorrowful was the morning of this day, to sir Edward Langdale. His sojourn, for the last time, at the seat of his ancestors, had been very short, yet it had comprised an age of suffering, which pressed yet, and must long press upon his heart; he could neither fly from it by dissipation, nor meet it by fortitude: for the evils brought upon us by our own indiscretion there is no honour in bearing with firmness, and the mind soon loses the energy which is not stimulated by self-approbation, nor rewarded by the plaudits of admiration. In bidding adieu to the sharer of his sorrows, he felt all the ignominy of exposing an innocent woman to encounter, alone, the buffetings of adversity, and it was with difficulty she could prevail on him to depart; nor would she have been able to effect

fect a circumstance she at once feared and desired, if Allen had not assured him that he was convinced the sense of his personal safety would make her amends for every other privation ; and that it would be impossible for him to regain his health in the immediate neighbourhood of a place where every transaction that could occur, for some weeks to come, must be of a nature to lacerate his feelings, and prevent the possibility of convalescence.

Sir Edward yielded despondently to these suggestions, and set out for Worcestershire; his patient wife struggled with her feelings, and bade him cheerfully adieu ; but the moment the carriage drove off, she retired to her own room, and indulged the anguish which arose in agony, and overwhelmed her very soul. She was now again in her paternal home—that home she had left so short a time, and must now leave again for ever, perhaps ; she fell on her knees, and endeavoured to pray for strength to endure her multiplied calamities ; her prayer

prayer was inarticulate, but humility and faith were its characteristics; and she arose refreshed and strengthened, depending on Him whose "strength is made perfect in our weakness," and "whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save."

It was now decided that Tom and Allen should set out for London, the one to procure money by mortgage on the Grove estate, which, if possible, Griselda was determined to keep in the family, and to dispose of her diamonds and pictures; and the other to sell, by private contract, his master's valuable stud; and in the mean time, lady Langdale herself was occupied in closely investigating the nature of the various claims, and assigning to the more necessitous, not the more clamorous, their respective liquidations. The day of sale was fixed on by those creditors who had made the distress at the Grove; and as the destruction there appeared inevitable, she settled that the whole of the furniture should be disposed of, and the suing creditor be  
first

first paid ; but being provided with a little ready cash by Allen, she placed Nicholson and Gilbert there, to take care that the goods were not sold improperly cheap, or injured by the carelessness of the salesmen ; of the former there soon became no fear, as the whole country, for many miles round, came to the sale ; and possessed with the idea that every thing in the house of such an elegant young couple must be elegant also, bought their goods, in many instances, at more than their original cost ; and after the contents of the house, and stable-furniture, were sold, a considerable surplus of ready money was paid into the hands of Griselda.

This temporary possession of money, by relieving her from many of the debts of little tradesmen, which pressed most heavily on her mind, gave her courage to look still further into her situation, and arrange her plans. Glad that sir Edward had adopted the plan of retiring to the Grange, in Yorkshire, she conceived the idea of appropriating

ting the income of the Elms to the liquidation of the debt upon the Grove; justly conceiving, that the income of the Grange estate, about one thousand five hundred pounds per annum, was equal to the establishment of any family resident there. She had a colliery contiguous to this estate, but not entailed with it, which, after being a great expence to the family for some years, had lately become a very promising concern, and which Allen had advised her to sell; but she greatly preferred borrowing money upon it, under the idea of its becoming a source of amusement, and even wealth to sir Edward. This matter she arranged by means of her agent in that county. Her correspondents, however divided or increased, did not prevent her writing nearly every day to sir Edward, and endeavouring, by every possible means, to sooth or divert his mind; never mentioning business further than to inform him that some unpleasant creditor was satisfied—some pressing difficulty removed.

From

From the time that it had entered her mind to procure a tenant for the Elms, she had entertained a great desire that general Harcourt would take it; but the awkward situation in which she stood with that gentleman rendered her unwilling to request any thing of his generosity, which she could not demand from his friendship; but at length her desire of obtaining a person whose name alone would account to the world for his residence there, induced her to conquer every difficulty, and she addressed a letter to him, offering the Elms on easy terms, for fourteen years; and at the same time instructed Allen to conclude the business, should it prove agreeable to the general, during his stay in London. Having dispatched these letters, and entirely satisfied her late servants at the Grove, and all her tradespeople, she set out on a visit to her anxious husband at sir William Elland's.

The extreme fatigue she had suffered of late, from mental anxiety and perpetual exertion,

exertion, had made her look so thin and ill, that sir Edward testified, at their first meeting, rather alarm than joy ; but as she had the pleasure of finding him look considerably better, the joy she felt communicated itself to every feature, and gave a transitory improvement to her looks, which restored self-complacency to her husband, and enabled him to enjoy the chastened pleasure of their meeting, which was more lover-like than any they had known before. When alone, Griselda revealed her scheme respecting the disposal of the Elms, which he had previously given up entirely to her, insisting only that it should not be sold or mortgaged, and had the pleasure of hearing him say that he should be happy to know a Harcourt again resided there ; and to assure her that every step she had taken appeared to him the best that could possibly have been adopted.

“ Then I am happy, *most* happy,” said Griselda.

“ But you look so pale with your happiness,



ness, my love, that it is impossible for me to partake it ; I will not part with you to be thus harrassed, to save a thousand Elms and Groves from destruction."

But notwithstanding this declaration, it became necessary in a few days that she should return ; still " hills on hills, and Alps on Alps, arose ;" and as soon as ever the arrival of Allen was spread over the country, new claimants appeared ; and though he was loath, yet he was obliged again to summon his lady, her presence being absolutely necessary.

She had the satisfaction of finding the general had not only closed with her proposition, but had deposited a sum in Allen's hand for the purchase of the furniture ; and that he had permitted her to draw for the rent upon him in advance, if it were found an object of convenience ; he had moreover inquired into the nature of all her little establishments in the village, and given orders for the continuance of them, under the auspices of lady Elinor. This was a matter  
of

of true rejoicing to the heart of Griselda, and once more the tear of joy visited her gladdened eye.

She now, as if eased of her chief burden, proceeded with a lightened heart to conclude her arrangements; she converted a part of the stables into a neat dwelling-house for Allen, who undertook, with Nicholson, Anne, and the bailiff, to turn the Grove into a profitable farm. The gardener took his old domain, on a short lease, at an easy rent, under promise of preserving it for beauty, as well as use, against the happy time which should restore it to its master. The servants at the Elms were retained on the general's account, and several engaged from the Grove, the rest being allowed board-wages till they should be engaged in service; the young miller had an addition of land made to his little farm; and all the pensioners of the Elms had a quarter's allowance paid in advance. Bonds and notes, of melancholy memory, were all completely paid, and the

voice of the creditor was no more heard in its walls. A melancholy silence succeeded the late distressful clamour; and Griselda was assisting Gilbert to pack her clothes, and a few trifling articles of favourite furniture, when she happened to look through the window, and saw Tom standing with his back against the garden gate, looking up the road that led to the Grove, apparently in deep and mournful contemplation of the ruin he had but just returned to witness; having sent the money he had taken for the best horses by Mr. Allen, and only now brought the remaining part of the sum: his known judgment and acknowledged honesty had made his mission successful beyond his most sanguine expectations; but the parting with his four-footed friends had cost Tom some bitter sighs; and to come back to see what he called ruin and desolation, notwithstanding the great heap of money *he* had taken, besides all that Mr. Allen had got for his lady's gewgaws, was more than he could bear.

Lady

Lady Langdale opened the casement, and begged him to come in—she had received a letter from the baronet in which he was mentioned.

Tom obeyed, but his pace was slow, and his gesture indicative of a very heavy heart.

Lady Langdale said—“ You see, Tom, we are settling for every body, as well as we are able ; and above all our servants we wish to consider *you* ; if, therefore, you would wish to be fixed in this country, either as groom to general Harcourt, or—”

“ General ! — the devil ! — I ax pardon, my lady ; but I didn't think to ahard you zay zuch a thing,” said Tom, with marks of anger in his countenance.

“ General Harcourt is a *good* man and a *rich* one ; he would be an excellent master to you ; but you shall have a farm, Tom — you shall be your own master.”

“ I zhant ; please your ladyship to recollect who you likes—sir Edward hired I, and sir Edward zhall discharge I, by your leave.”

“Your master tells me, Tom, to make you these offers, but he says here—‘If, after *all*, the silly fellow should persist in staying with me, which I think very likely, pray tell him all the difficulties of his situation ; for you know he will have as many employments as Scrub, and not one intelligent friend left in the stable to console him for his sufferings.”

Tom laughed, cried, and at last said—  
“I ax your pardon, my lady, but you *scar-ed* me mainly ; I thought hiz honour wor for turning me off after all, and that wad ha been scrubby, ye’ll allow.”

“It is our duty to fix you in the world, Tom ; and we thought you might wish to marry and settle in your own country.”

“Noa, noa, I ha zeen quite enuff o’ weddings, my lady, in all conscience, i’ my master’s case ; and bezides, I never wor geen to wild ways ; I’ll ztick to my place, an az to work, I can drive a chaise, brush a coat, or clean a ztable, wi any body ; and though  
mayhap

mayhap I zould be ratherly awkward at waiting at table, if his honour has nobbut I to do it, why I zhall soon larn."

"I have no doubt of it, Tom, and I therefore hope you will be happy with us; and you know there is the brown mare, which your master knows nothing of, for a bit of comfort to you."

Tom laughed—"Ah, my lady, we ha cheated him nicely there, she's the best bit o' blood we ever had ith' steables; it wad ha gon hard wi me to ha sell'd her."

"Well, but Tom, here is money for you, which I would advise you to leave in Allen's hand, before we leave this country; you are the last person I settle with, and I pay you according to my means, not your merits; here is one hundred pounds for your sale of the horses, for I know you have not pocketed the accustomed fees, which would have been much more; and here is one hundred and thirty, which I find to be the arrears of your wages, which have been too small for your place; you will therefore ac-

cept thirty guineas from me as a proof of my——”

“ I will neither have money nor proof, nor any thing else, please God,” said Tom, blubbering; “ doan’t I know all about things?—doan’t I know at we lost every thing at York, and all that? noa, noa, I’ll have noa money.”

“ Then I cannot take you into Yorkshire, Tom; for my orders are to pay all our debts of every kind.”

Tom considered a moment—“ I know cash is cash, and ye’ll want it all, my lady, when we gets into a no nation place where may be fine foalks pays just zame az poor un’s; so if ye’ll please to teak this now, I’ze teak it again whenever his honour comes back to his own houses—will that do?”

“ Extremely well, Tom; I will give you my note.”

This important point arranged, and every thing finally settled with Mr. Allen, who, like Tom, had for some time refused to settle his affairs, lady Langdale at length enjoyed the satisfaction

satisfaction of rejoining her bosom's lord, without a single care upon her mind but what arose from her solicitude for his personal comfort ; but the habit she had acquired of being perpetually calculating, the continual alarm she had been in from the sense of impending danger, added to her natural timidity, had given a gloom to her brow, a rapid and tremulous shake in her voice, and a nervous weakness to her frame, that shewed how much she had suffered, both in her mind and her constitution ; and proved to her friends that it would be a long, long time before either would regain their accustomed strength and equanimity.

With a tender and mournful eye sir Edward saw these ravages in the beauty and health of his estimable wife ; but so much was his heart set at ease by her complete arrangement of his affairs, and so far beyond his most sanguine hopes had the management of his *own* estate been settled, that in the first flush of his joy he almost felt angry with her for not participating his



emotions with equal warmth and exultation; but when he looked at her sunken eye and faded form, he melted into sorrow, and thought even their mutual happiness had been too dearly purchased.

As Griselda had sent Tom privately into Yorkshire with his precious charge, the favourite mare, and Gilbert also to prepare the house for their reception, she willingly accepted lady Elland's invitation to spend a week or two with her; the more especially as sir Edward now found himself well enough to accompany his friend a-shooting, though not yet able to pull a trigger himself. Griselda had the satisfaction of seeing him every day regain some portion of health and strength; and she was now convinced that his recovery was owing to the removal of those pecuniary difficulties which had perpetually pressed upon his spirits, and excited the slow fever which had sapped the springs of life, and would most probably have soon thrown him into a confirmed consumption. She congratulated herself

herself on the exertions she had used, and the happy end she had made of these harassing concerns ; but she was surprised and sorry to find her own nerves, shattered as it were, to very atoms ; and that a thousand little complaints, unfelt during the time her mind was involved in the confusion of business, now rose to scare repose from that pillow of rest and independence she had so lately and so dearly purchased.

It was not till the middle of November that sir Edward and his lady left sir William and his amiable bride, to take up their new residence in a house not inhabited by the owners for the last twelve years, during which period it had been managed by a bailiff, under the inspection of a neighbouring attorney, a man of great probity, but little taste, who, if the farmer produced such monies as he thought the number and value of the acres ought to produce to his employers, was perfectly easy whether the lawn was ploughed or grazed : so the farmer took his own way very com-

posedly, and made a few alterations not perfectly consonant with picturesque beauty, as we shall perhaps find occasion to mention.

The site of the Grange was one of the most beautiful to be found in the West Riding of Yorkshire towards the North, where it is every where full of the most enchanting prospects; it stood on a fine slope, with a beautiful terrace immediately before the house, from which the eye descended to a lawn, ornamented with groups of trees, terminating in a vale, through which the Wharfe (that river which seems, in its romantic and ever-varying stream, to combine all that has been said and sung of river beauty since the world began) ran winding and murmuring through banks fringed by old elms, and guarded by massy rocks, that from the opposite banks swelled by degrees into lofty mountains, and frowning precipices.

Griselda was born at the Grange, and lived there till she had entered her fifteenth

6 year;

year; in this majestic and sylvan scenery she had imbibed that sublime and correct taste, that noble simplicity and enthusiastic sensibility, which formed the strong features of her mind, and gave to her manners and conversation a combined character of sweetness, and strength of dignified humility and genuine purity, seldom found in any circle of life, but equally impressive in its effects on all. Here she had rambled with a father whose judicious care had ensured her the blessing of a sound constitution, by inuring her to early exercise, while he preserved her from vulgar habits; and had added the delicacy of female manners, by mental cultivation, in those very walks which necessarily included athletic attainments. Here, too, she had imbibed, from an elegant and tender mother, every accomplishment which could add grace to virtue, and power to loveliness; and here, from her earliest recollection, she had beheld in both parents an example of worth, and a proof of the existence of happiness, such

such as she had never beheld in any other situation.

On the death of an uncle, Mr. Harcourt had been induced, at the earnest solicitation of that uncle's maiden sisters, to take up his residence with them at the Elms, which was a spacious and commodious mansion, but for which he would not have quitted his pleasant home at the Grange, if the pride of a father had not led him to make the sacrifice. Long cramped in his fortune, he had become habituated to confine his expences to the limits of his purse, notwithstanding the benevolence and liberality of his heart ; and no temptation of interest could have induced him, in his own person, to have renounced his " paternal acres," for the prospect of the Elms estate, to which he was the legal heir, though not the immediate possessor ; but what parents exist who feel not ambition for their child, and such a child as Griselda ?

The removal of Mr. Harcourt with his family was attended by many of those advantages

tages which accompany increase of wealth and family importance. He was the known heir of the Elms, and already considered its master; and the two old ladies, now far advanced in life, who were the present incumbents, found a pleasure in his society, and a comfort in his protection, for which they were grateful; whilst they regarded his daughter as the being who was to keep their ancient family from decay, and concentrate in her person all the wealth, beauty, and honour, that had ever belonged to it; but their admiration of her was a source of continual torment to the poor girl, and still more to her amiable mother, though neither of them revealed their vexation to Mr. Harcourt, who, much occupied in repairing those evils which had, from the age of his uncle, crept into the management of his estate, knew not that his Griselda, who had hitherto lived free as the mountain roe, was now subjected to the incessant reproofs, wearisome exhortations, and snappish critiques, of two old maidens, who,  
having

having never lived under the roof with children, could neither enter into their feelings, make allowance for their desires, or contribute to their amusements.

These petty vexations fell most hard on Mrs. Harcourt, whose gentle nature shrunk from recrimination, and who felt every word uttered against her daughter as a dagger in her own heart, innocently, in one sense, as it might be spoken; for she saw that the old ladies almost adored the very being they eternally scolded. Her only consolation was, that she observed peace was instantly restored, the very moment the voice of her husband was heard in the house; for both the ladies, though frequently jarring with each other, agreed implicitly in *one* thing—the respect due to a *man* as such; and in the midst of her uneasiness, she would sometimes smile at observing an obedience and deference paid to her husband, by two women, who declared they had remained single through life because they could never submit to the restraints of

of matrimony, which could never have been required from them by any reasonable man, in the state they had so much dreaded.

The second year after their arrival at the Elms, that tender connexion between sir Edward and lady Langdale took place, which was attended with so much pain to all parties, as related in the first volume of these memoirs; in which, after a severe struggle, Griselda divested her mind so far of all selfish feelings, as to resign her lover to her father, "though every heart-string bled at thoughts of parting."

In this affair, perhaps the mother again was the principal sufferer; for the anguish of a child's heart is written in deeper lines on the bosom of such a parent; be that as it may, the health of Mrs. Harcourt from that time evidently declined, and Griselda, as if conscious of the cause, redoubled every assiduity, and seemed to exist only in the mother who needed her tenderness.

Things were in this state when Mr. Harcourt, in the prime of life, and full of health,



health, by one of those visitations which mock all human foresight, was seized with an inflammation, which despised all human aid, and in a few hours decided his fate. When violent pain gave way to those symptoms which are the sad forerunners of dissolution, he saw and conversed with his wife and daughter; and displayed, in death, a striking proof of the power of that religion he had professed through life, being indeed able

“ To build a bridge across the gulf of death,  
And land us safely on the distant shore.”

To enter on this agonizing scene is foreign to our purpose ; we therefore only add, that by slow degrees, as we have already mentioned, his amiable wife trod the same awful path about three years afterwards. During her illness she became so anxious for the fate of Griselda, whose youthful bloom she every day saw consuming in the baleful influence of a sick-chamber, that she repented not returning to the Grange,

Grange, or fixing on some other habitation more congenial to youthful life ; and whenever she could touch on the subject without awakening the grief of the trembling girl, she would advise her to leave the Elms as a habitation : but when the last awful scene was closed, the helplessness of the aged inhabitants still held a claim on the heart of the generous Griselda ; and she continued, with all the faithful attentions of a child, to nurse the declining flame of life, till each dropt gently into the tomb, breathing their last sigh in praying for blessings on the head of their youthful comforter.

After the death of the last sister, sir Edward renewed his addresses to Miss Harcourt, now left sole possessor of the Elms, and the fortunes of her two great-aunts, together with a handsome sum deposited by her kind father in the funds, in addition to her mother's jointure ; and it was generally thought these were the charms which now attracted the heart of the gay baronet, unless

unless some remains of his old passion, or the pride of rivalling a man of high rank, who lately made her an offer, could be assigned as a reason; we will not pretend to say whether *all* these reasons together, or one above all—*viz.* his thorough esteem for her superior merit, operated so as to produce this effect; but certain it is, that the heart of the constant and tender Griselda, after due consideration, yielded as we have seen, rather in the hope of making *him* worthy than *herself* happy; and for a distant; though glorious object, sacrificed every consideration of present aggrandizement by a greater connexion, and of the better enjoyments which the independence of her mind, the largeness of her fortune, and the benevolence of her disposition, so eminently calculated her to estimate and enjoy.

END OF VOL. II.









•

.

.







